

PRINTED AT THE *Country Life Press*, GARDEN CITY, N. Y., U. S. A.

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FIRST EDITION

DEDICATION

Le propre de la vérité, c'est de n'être jamais excessive. Quel besoin a-t-elle d'exagérer? Il y a ce qu'il faut détruire, et il y a ce qu'il faut simplement éclairer et regarder. L'examen bienveillant et grave, quelle force! N'apportons point la flamme là où la lumière suffit. LES MISÉRABLES, II.

THIS IS THE RECORD of a year. Some years in human history are more eventful and significant than others. There have been years of great beginnings—1492, when the long transatlantic seaways opened on the West; and 1776, when the New World itself cast off its moorings and started on a voyage of its own; and 1789, when something was begun in Europe that has not yet ended—or years like 1848 that were too weak to carry through what they began, or 1745 that scarcely made even a beginning. But each of them was more memorable in its way than the common run of years. So it comes that 1649 still sounds like a knell in English ears, and 1870 will always ring tragically down the corridors of France. And there have been other years which stand like archways through which the world has passed from one phase of history into the next, as it passed in 1815 from the wartime life of the preceding twenty years to the more settled order of the next half century.

Nineteen hundred and thirty-six, I think, was of that order. The further we recede from it, the more it stands out as a moment of transition, a bridge between the postwar age

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in which we had been living for almost as long as many of us could remember and that quite different epoch in which we live today. For on the farther side of it the world of white men was very largely what wartime events had made it. Most of its phenomena had causes which stood in direct relation with the World War or its aftermath, and many of its leading figures belonged to that generation of public men. But when 1936 is passed, we breathe a different air. Diplomacy no longer talks the language of 1918, since circumstances have imposed a fresh start by shattering the former frame of international affairs. Politicians in America no longer dream in Mr Roosevelt's second term of a return to Mr Harding's "normalcy." And nearer home the long-awaited prospect of King Edward's reign has come and gone. It is quite evident that 1936, which saw so varied and exciting a succession of events, marked the transition from postwar to the present and will take its place in the small company of memorable years.

That being so, there is a good deal to be said for making a record of it, for seeing it with the eyes of a contemporary who lived at the very centre of it. Most of its events are already richly documented. Other witnesses have not withheld their testimony; and using all that they have said or written I have supplemented it with the evidence of my own eyes and ears. The form adopted is that in which I have already attempted to portray THE HUNDRED YEARS between 1837 and 1936, giving the reader a selection of its leading moments which combine into the mosaic portrait of an age. For its separate pieces will serve, I hope, to compose a pic-

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ture. That picture owes much of its authenticity to the privilege which enabled me over a term of years to see something of King Edward at work before and after his accession to the throne, to the lucky accident which took me into General Franco's Spain within a month of his rebellion, and to the additions which my knowledge of American affairs received from visiting President Roosevelt at the White House and watching him in action at more than one of his press conferences. A similar good fortune also rendered me familiar with other scenes of the year's activities in North Africa and South America.

More than one, no doubt, of those who played in that eventful game will write down what they remember. But few players ever see much more than their own corner of the game. For the looker-on, we know, sees most of it—especially when his seat is a good one; and here is what he saw.

P. G.

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Note on Material

THE HISTORIAN of recent times has all the material for an authentic narrative. Unlike the investigator of a remoter past, he is not reduced to reconstructing it at secondhand from the bare bones of manuscript and printed sources. For he can clothe it in the living flesh of his own observation, supplemented by the memories of those contemporary witnesses whom he is in a position to interrogate about the events in which they took part. What would Froude not have given for a sight of the Armada bearing upchannel or a few minutes' conversation with Queen Elizabeth? That is the privilege reserved for an historian who deals with the more recent past, from which his narrative derives its greater authenticity and vividness.

The march of science has supplemented his resources by one addition of incalculable value. No historian has hitherto acknowledged or employed the new authority constituted by the newsreels. Yet their unchallengeable evidence enables him to reconstruct events with a precision and solidity quite unattainable by narratives relying solely on the meagre testimony of isolated witnesses. For the spectator of an old newsreel is enabled by its magic to *relive* a past event and, what is more, to cause it to be recalled for him just as many times as he may need in order to observe each detail of the passing scene. When Mr H. G. Wells's

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Traveller sat in the saddle of the Time Machine and pressed its starting lever, he did no more than the present writer has been privileged to do when comfortably seated in a small theatre and asking for the German march into the Rhineland in 1936 to be re-enacted on the screen. That miracle of which he has made full use, is an immense addition to the historian's resources; and he takes pride in acknowledging a new authority for the first time.

Not that there is any shortage of the more normal classes of material. For the year 1936 has produced an ample sufficiency of books on which to found a study of its course. The facts in outline are contained in *The Annual Register* and in the more analytical *King-Hall Survey*, supplemented in some detail by Mr G. B. Harrison's ingenious compilation from *The Times* in *The Day Before Yesterday* and Sir Philip Gibbs's more personal *Ordeal in England*. The course of international affairs is narrated fully in Professor A. J. Toynbee's authoritative *Survey* and its supplement, *Documents on International Affairs, 1936*, on which a commentary is provided by Professor R. B. Mowat's *Europe in Crisis* and *The Fight for Peace*, as well as by Mr G. T. Garratt's *Mussolini's Roman Empire* and Madame Tabouis's *Blackmail or War*. The quickened pace of modern politics ensures the publication of important documents at a far earlier stage than was once customary; and this practice enables the historian to get to work upon a period without the time lag which was formerly inevitable. Nor is this helpful tendency confined to Europe, since the recent issue of *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* facilitates authoritative study of events in the United States. The New Deal has, of course, an extensive literature of its own, which has been fully used; and the same is true of Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and the war in Spain, to say nothing of King Edward's reign and abdication, upon which the writer has been privileged to read no less than

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eight books of widely varying quality from the hands of Mr Compton Mackenzie, Mr Kingsley Martin, Messrs Frank Owen and R. J. Thompson, Mr J. L. White, Mr S. B. Leeds, Mr W. B. Wells, Mr H. Bolitho and Mr G. Dennis. The files of leading newspapers and magazines supply an ample supplement. But though his reading has been of much assistance, the writer has preferred to found his narrative, wherever possible, upon his own observation of scenes and persons, supplemented by the evidence of persons who took part in the scenes which he describes.

JANUARY

I

Westminster, I

ALL THE FACES in Trafalgar Square that winter afternoon were turned towards the Strand, because the sight they had come out to see would come from that direction. But when it came, there was no more for them to stare at than five mounted policemen, a draped gun carriage flanked by two files of marching grenadiers and five bareheaded men in black walking a little hurriedly behind it to keep up with the horses. There was no more than that for them to see, and they knew all of them by sight—best of all, perhaps, the first of them, who seemed to set the pace, as his fur collar and bright hair went down the silent streets to Westminster behind the gun carriage.

It was a queer little procession, with nothing of the public spectacle about it; and the staring crowds seemed almost to intrude upon a private function. But the cruel ritual of monarchy imposes such intrusions; and in the succeeding days the public appetite for mournful pageantry was richly gratified. More than three quarters of a million of them were to file through the great hall at Westminster, past rigid guardsmen resting on their arms reversed and the tall flambeaux and the royal coffin and the cross. That was a funeral cortege in which they walked themselves; but it was not the last. For one chilly morning, as they

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packed the streets from Whitehall to Paddington or surged dangerously into every opening along the silent route, a great procession began to move through London under the grey winter sky.

This time the pageant was not muted, and a long column of bright uniforms went past on foot to military music—infantry detachments, dismounted cavalry, marines, jack-booted Life Guards, kilted regiments, foreign officers in unlikely costumes, chargerless field marshals, pedestrian admirals and walking airmen—all passing by to the lift and wail of army bands and the slow beat of muffled drums. The sight of so many horse soldiers on foot gave it an unnatural air. But reality rode in the rear of the procession, where the murmurs died away and the gun carriage moved through the staring multitude behind a square of marching seamen. The same slight figure paced stiffly after it; but this time his head was covered, and he wore uniform. The long cortege wound through the winter streets which had seen Queen Victoria pass by among the same greatcoated mourning and the last drive of Edward VII through his capital. Those had been great occasions, when high personages rode on horseback through the streets for them to recognise; and they had recognised them all—King Edward with his bearded geniality, the slighter figure of his bearded son, the Kaiser's rigid mask of royal grief, and all the minor royalties. Theirs had been distant figures which appeared from time to time upon the margin of their lives, divinities emerging from some Olympian seclusion to be seen in attitudes of royal grief or benediction. But this time the procession was not quite the same. For though the pageant was unchanged, there was someone they knew in the procession.

And how well they knew him. When they came to think of it, they had known him for nearly twenty years. His childhood scarcely counted. For there was little to dis-

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tinguish their consciousness of other royal figures from their vague awareness of a round-faced child behind the windows of a royal nursery or a short-featured boy playing at soldiers in a bandolier and sailor suit on the smooth green of royal lawns. Little anecdotes began to reach them about his pert replies to august relatives—"It's too late now, Grandpa: it was a caterpillar on your lettuce, but you've eaten it"—or his demure ambition to become a policeman when he was large enough, or his enquiry why the sentries stayed outside when it was raining. But these were the small change of loyalty, and he was no more to them than the other venerated figures of the royal pantheon—a wisp of silk and lace on Queen Victoria's tremendous lap flanked by the frock-coated shapes of her son and grandson, an upstanding little sailor beside his ample grandfather on board the royal yacht, or a small Highlander on Deeside in kilted groups of other royal Highlanders. He presently assumed cadet's uniform at the Royal Naval College, passed out as midshipman to join his ship, and once appeared for his investiture as Prince of Wales in the remarkable (though not unbecoming) costume devised by heraldry for the occasion. His youthful image began to grow familiar, and there were little stories about his distaste for privilege and the cheerful encouragement of this admirable sentiment by disrespectful seniors at Osborne and in the gunroom of HMS Hindustan. But beyond his looks they knew hardly anything about him, and he was still nothing more to them than royalty.

The pleasant years before the war went by; and presently he was to be seen abroad with a straw hat at unexpected angles, investigating the French language and the more eligible aspects of French life. A growing vista of instructors—early governesses, private tutors French and English, naval schoolmasters at Osborne and Dartmouth, specialists of all kinds—seemed to accumulate in an inform-

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ing avenue along his passage through the years; and it was small wonder that an experienced courtier, confronted by the unexpected processes of thought which this drastic training stimulated, found in the prince a "charming mind—grave, thoughtful, restrained, gentle, kindly, perhaps a trifle obstinate and sombre for so young a lad." Many of his father's youthful subjects at eighteen were thoughtful too, though the discreet observer seemed to find this quality remarkable in one so highly placed. Perhaps his admirable education was producing an intelligence that would enable him to find his level in ordinary company, though there was no chance as yet of testing it. His long apprenticeship proceeded; and Oxford, home of learning, field sports, promiscuous political discussion and nocturnal music on strange instruments in eager hands, engulfed him. His formal instruction was in wise hands deeply versed in the British Constitution; his equestrian proclivities were no less judiciously controlled; his social education lay with the Junior Common Room of Magdalen College; and whilst his music was self-taught, the Oxford University Officers' Training Corps embarked with gusto on the military instruction of a prince. But still the world knew little more of him than that he was approachable, though so few of them had approached him yet, and he was still unknown, a smiling youth in a tweed jacket.

That was the Oxford generation which was called away before its time. The empty quadrangles lay waiting for them in the autumn sunshine of 1914; but they did not return. Summoned to face destruction because Hohenzollern vanity and German greed for power conflicted with the public law of Europe, they left home. It was thought fitting that the prince should train as a junior subaltern with the Grenadier Guards. But his home was not the same as theirs, since he was the heir of England; and when he pleaded with the secretary of state to leave it for the

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front with his battalion—"I have plenty of brothers, so what does it matter if I am killed?"—a grim refusal rumbled in Lord Kitchener's moustache, as the field marshal informed him that there was no objection to his being killed but that there were the strongest reasons why he should not be captured, that he had no experience, and that until there was a settled line in France they could not face the prospect of the Germans scoring him (a human point in their inhuman game) as a prisoner. This brutal truth could hardly be denied, so long as armies groped for one another across northern France and the war of movement crept up uncertainly towards the sea; and though he pleaded almost tearfully for leave to go (he was a man of twenty now), the prohibition was maintained and he was kept in training still, a small subaltern in khaki tramping in front of his big grenadiers along the Essex lanes. But when it ceased to be the truth, when the first German thrust at Ypres was held and the long Allied line ran curving in a frozen grapple all the way from the sandhills on the Belgian coast to the edge of Switzerland, the embargo lifted and he left for France.

Then his life began to march in step with the reality of other English lives. First attached to G.H.Q. and then transferred to 2nd Division, I Corps, and finally the Guards Division, he saw the common lot of Englishmen in time of war with a persistence and ubiquity that whitened the remaining hair of officers in high command. For the prince was a most trying charge, and official energies were soon consumed in a continuous endeavour to keep him where disasters were unlikely to occur or to reclaim him from those insalubrious localities to which he had escaped when nobody was looking. "A bad shelling," as one regimental officer ruefully remarked, "will always produce the Prince of Wales." The simple cause of those vagaries lay in the bias of his mind, which led him to dislike intensely

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those humiliating precautions which were the due badge of his rank and to crave instead for the still higher privilege of sharing the common lot. He had tried hard at Oxford to be an undergraduate among undergraduates, and in France he strove successfully to be a soldier among soldiers. He saw his fellow subjects at the tasks, always dreary and distasteful and more than often highly dangerous, of modern warfare; and as he watched them in the muddy fields of France, he learned one lesson that a whole company of lectures on social science could scarcely have imparted in the most protracted course of private lectures. For he learned to know the common man.

And, in return, the common man learned something of the Prince of Wales. Hitherto this knowledge had been confined to a restricted world of courtiers, undergraduates, naval cadets and grenadiers. But now the circle widened; and as the war dragged on, unnumbered Englishmen began to know a fair-haired subaltern with a trim figure, who concealed behind a pipe and a quick manner the fact that he was Prince of Wales. They met him in dugouts, estaminets and front-line trenches; they heard him laugh and watched him drive his car or trot dutifully after his seniors; he seemed able to talk easily to almost anyone in the most unexpected places—on muddy waysides, at trench corners, in rest billets or the depressing wards of base hospitals. They liked talking to him too. Until then the Prince of Wales had been a lesser constellation in the distant sky of royalty, a remote figure to be read about in the newspapers and greeted with the embarrassed loyalty which Englishmen accord to their institutions. But that was over now. So many of them came to know him in those years of war that the prince ceased to be an official portrait hung in the respectful gallery of British minds. Indeed, it was almost as if the picture stepped lightly from its frame, walked up to them quite solid and

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three-dimensional and asked them for a light. They knew him now; and in the process they discovered with profound relief that what they feared from past experience would be a personage had proved to be a person.

That figure, seen in France by the harsh light of war, was the first image to fasten his identity in public consciousness; and twenty years away, as the slow music of his father's funeral lifted and sank along the watching streets of 1936, they saw the Prince of Wales. For their memory of a young soldier seen twenty years before lived for them in the grave-eyed man whom they saw pacing solitary behind the gun carriage; and as he went by, there was someone in the procession whom they knew.

He knew them also. That was the major lesson of the war for him, of which he later said, "In those four years I mixed with men: in those four years I found my manhood." He learned to know them in the levelling academy of war—muddy figures among splintered trees, hoarse voices on duckboards at midnight, dripping Australians after a swim in the canal, grinning faces in steel helmets, in unholy woollen caps, in bandages. They all seemed much the same to him, laughing at the same jokes, sharing a common danger and sweating with the same apprehension. For war disclosed (on lines, perhaps, that Marx would scarcely have approved) a classless society. That was the revelation of the war to those who lived in it. Victorians had noted with gay condescension that

*the colonel's lady an' Judy O'Grady
Are sisters under their skins.*

But they made no similar discovery about their husbands. That secret was reserved for the next generation, which learned in France that for many purposes one man is just as good as another. It was too obvious for an observant subaltern to miss; and this simple revelation formed a

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strange addition to the education of a prince. The theory of democratic government had been an item in his excellent curriculum, and he absorbed it with other admirable topics and without undue enthusiasm. But the practice of democracy is rarely taught, since it is not a classroom subject. A happy chance brought him in contact with its simple truths in France, where the broad fraternity of war taught him a striking lesson in democracy that never left him. For he had gone into it a royal boy straight from the guarded paths of royal adolescence. But when the bugles of 1918 sounded the "Cease fire," he came out of it a grown man who had learnt to take his place in a highly organised society, had seen other men in action and learnt to appraise their value (or the reverse) with the swift and not invariably respectful judgment with which subalterns on active service view their elders, and above all had met and discovered in himself a strong liking for the common man.

That was the major lesson that he brought home with him from France. Known to a wider circle now, he seemed to like it quite as well as it was growing to like him. Official contacts were, perhaps, a trifle savourless, and solemn personages in high collars were not the best of company. But he had learnt to look beyond them to the ranked multitudes of ordinary people. There was less fuss about them, and he hated fuss; and when it came down to it, they really had far more of interest to say. He seemed to see the cheering crowds which form the unchanging backcloth of all royal scenery as something more than a mere hedge of smiles, of cheering voices without names, of hands that he had never shaken. For he had met them going up the line, watched them write letters home and shared cover with them in bombardments. Here was a vast and unrehearsed extension of his careful training. Few princes meet their fellow subjects in such bulk or under circum-

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stances that so thoroughly exclude the niceties of etiquette. For contacts on active service can hardly be hand-picked by equeries, and in those years his friendliness enjoyed free play. The natural reserve of Englishmen, which normally prevents informal conversation in railway carriages excepting under the immediate impact of an accident, evaporated in that protracted accident which lasted four long years; and the British Expeditionary Force was a vast university in which he learned, first of his line, to know what common men are like. Small wonder that the experience marked him deeply. For none of all the men whom the war educated was more matured by it than he.

Now he was twenty-four, and subalterns of twenty-four who had come through the war were older than their years. Youths no longer, they had seen death and life, success and failure, defeat and victory. Their judgment of their elders was apt to be a little ruthless; and though their recreations were still boyish, they were grown men in experience, annealed in fires their elders never knew. He was of that company; and though he told a listening Guildhall in the next year that "the part I played was, I fear, a very insignificant one," it helped to form him. He could never be a pipe-clay soldier now, since he had learnt his business on active service; and though his part had been a small one, it had taught him what the play was all about and who the other players were.

More information on the latter point awaited him in the next stage of his career. He had already made acquaintance with Australians and New Zealanders on a brief tour of duty in Egypt; the South Africans saw something of him in the neighbourhood of Delville Wood; and when the firing died away, he was in billets with the Canadians. In time of war the empire was conveniently concentrated for inspection; but with the Armistice it resumed its normal span. An English king had once been able to display

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the Prince of Wales to his principality from the walls of Carnarvon Castle. But if the process was to be repeated in the years following the war, it would involve a vast imperial odyssey. That prospect faced him, when it was decided to complete his training with an extended course of visits to the empire overseas and at the same time to display this young embodiment of England to the watching theatre of the English-speaking world.

It was an arduous performance on an unprecedented stage; and the performer's figure was still remembered gratefully, as the slow trumpets of King George's funeral went through the streets and the crowding watchers saw the man they knew pace stiffly in the long procession. They had learnt something of him in the war; but they really came to know him as the indomitable traveller whose name was always in the news of the succeeding years. For the public scene had been a little flat after the final victory. The drab continuity of modern war is unproductive of heroic reputations. Besides, too many pairs of sharp civilian eyes had seen it close at hand to feel much reverence for martial leaders. For whoever else had won the war, it was not, they felt, the high command. So this time there was no Wellington for them to worship, no Nelson to inter; and the acerbities of politics, resumed with cheerful gusto after the interregnum of the war, swiftly consumed their gratitude to ministers who had contrived the victory. But victory was theirs; and the public mind, soberly elated by the brave survival of the British Empire in a world of vanished dynasties and disappearing empires, badly wanted somebody to cheer. It must be some emblem of themselves, of the vast achievement of the war, of their common purpose and the brighter future of a rising generation which their own had been sacrificed to win. What better symbol than the Prince of Wales? He had shared their experience, and his bright future stood for all they

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hoped for. Ex-service man and heir to their converging loyalties, he seemed to fit the role to perfection; and their need was promptly met by his emergence on the public scene of five continents as the mascot of the British Empire.

The cue was bravely answered; and for more than ten years of travel he sustained the role through hours of ceremony, weeks of pilgrimage and mile after mile of popular applause. He was twenty-five when his ship sailed for Canada for the first time, and the cheering crowds saw a young officer like so many others who had just come home from France. That was the class which he belonged to now. The same loyalties, the same experience, the same prejudice against the more tiresome forms of ceremonial and the same conviction that life was only entertaining when they were off duty informed them all. Their duties, happily for them, had ended with the war. But his continued and were loyally discharged from Newfoundland to the Pacific slope. Then he turned home again as the prairie provinces handed him to Ontario and Ontario passed him to Quebec, the shy figure of a young British officer serving a strenuous apprenticeship in the unaccustomed exercise of speechmaking.

A crowded interlude switched him across the international line to the United States, where the prince made acquaintance with the quicker tempo and more exuberant festivities of the New World, at home to an exceptionally honoured guest. Not that his American experiences were wholly gay, since he called at the White House to see a broken president among his pillows. Sad emblem of the swiftly withered hopes of 1918 which had sent Mr Wilson, erect and rubicund, to drive through friendly London streets and set the world in order at the Paris Conference, a shade received him now. Less than a year before a ribald Horse Guards band at Hyde Park Corner had blared out its gay conviction that "we've wound up the

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Watch on the Rhine," as Woodrow Wilson drove smiling by. But now his grip upon the world had tragically weakened. His grip on his own country, headed for "the apparently soulless decade" (as a successor termed it) and so soon to be the United States of Mr Harding, was weakening as well; and the young officer from England faced a broken man who had failed cruelly to remake the world. It was not his first or last encounter with a victim of the war. They met him in guards of honour, in immense parades, in little groups at wayside stations. Ex-service men, Alberta cowboys, Indians, wheatgrowers of the Plains, French *habitants*, Washington sightseers, sharp-eyed journalists and Wall Street brokers had all seen the Prince of Wales at work everywhere from Vancouver to the roaring centre of New York and found him an incomparable visitor.

That was now his *métier*. The test of his first journey had been extremely searching. But it was richly satisfied; and Canada launched him on his career at twenty-five. There was little precedent for it. True, some of his predecessors had made progresses about the world in a less crowded age. But King Edward decorously visiting rajahs or viewing biblical antiquities in the informing company of Dr Stanley, King George cruising in HMS *Bacchante* or discharging the high duties of opening a Commonwealth Parliament at Melbourne, touring the empire in the relative restraint of manners and publicity which prevailed in 1901, and surveying India a few years later from the safe heights of viceregal etiquette—these royal travellers were worlds away from the Prince of Wales battling through a New York crowd or handshaken into numbness and bandages by eager Canadians or perched on the back of a slow-moving car in order that excited multitudes might have a better view of him. He was called upon to navigate that vortex with what grace and dignity he could command;

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and by some happy blend of personal resource he managed to achieve it.

This formidable addition to the nation's repertory was promptly recognised, and the prince found himself deputed to tour the world in his country's interests. Besides, there was still his training to be thought of, his everlasting preparation for the throne; and what better finishing school could there be than a round of visits to the vast territory over which he was to reign? But that was secondary now, since he was nearly twenty-six; and at that age most men are entering on their professions. So the Prince of Wales at twenty-six had entered upon his, king's deputy and touring representative of Britain to all Britons overseas. After North America his next mission was to New Zealand and Australia by way of the Panama Canal. It was an arduous succession of formal and informal functions, of banquets, Maori gatherings, receptions, drives, surf riding at Waikiki and still longer rides on the resounding surf of local eloquence. Australian handshaking was no less destructive than Canada's enthusiastic exercises; and the normal programme of parades enlarged itself for the inclusion of stray ex-service gatherings. For strict adherence to the programme was never altogether to his taste. Official presentations were a depressing duty, but they rarely added much to enjoyment or to his acquaintance with ordinary people, with the common men who pressed against policemen's backs to see him in the streets or get near enough to hear what he was saying to their more privileged superiors. His experience in France had given him a taste for their society; and after that initiation he was less interested in their betters, whose official conversation was usually far from entertaining and impeded by an undue sense of his own rank. Indeed, he might have echoed the interpretation of another Prince of Wales imagined sixty years before, when Artemus Ward "sot

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and tawked there sum time abowt matters and things, and bimeby I axed him how he liked being Prince as fur as he'd got.

"'To speak plain Mister Ward,' he sed, 'I don't much like it. I'm sick of all this bowin and scrapin and crawlin and hurrain over a boy like me. I would rather go through the country quietly and enjoy myself in my own way, with the other boys, and not be made a Show of to be garped at by everybody. When the *peple* cheer me I feel pleased, fur I know they mean it, but if these one-horse offishuls wood know how I see threw all their moves and understan exackly what they air after, and knowd how I larft at 'em in private, thayd stop kissin my hands and fawnin over me as thay now do. But you know Mr Ward I can't help bein a Prince, and I must do all I kin to fit myself fur the persishun I must sumtime ockepy.'"

That mood was rising on the prince as he discharged his public duties. The long round of official contacts might satisfy a cloistered potentate raised in the decorous seclusion of royal residences and capable of thinking that a minister embodied a whole nation or a mayor could successfully impersonate all the citizens of a great city. But his war training had taught him otherwise; and it was growing plain to him that common men signified more in the community than might have been supposed from the official programme of his visit. That conviction sometimes rendered him a shade perfunctory in the performance of official duties, when they seemed a little meaningless. But it was equally responsible for rendering his public work far more effective, since it was increasingly directed to the common man. The work was growing on him now; and as it grew, he seemed to grow with it. For the young envoy, who had started as a mere royal emblem, was now a travelled man with an accumulating fund of knowledge of his fellow subjects' lives, anxieties and

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occupations in most quarters of the world. After his travels the dark mystery, by which the kindly mind of royalty is often baffled, of what people do when they are not at court or lining the streets could never be a mystery to him. He began to know them now, the men whom he had seen in France or listened to at home on sheep stations, ranches, decks of steamers, railway platforms, at dinner tables, dances, small upcountry gatherings, in the intervals of local concerts and along the whole range of his ramifying contacts with the British Empire. He had once seemed to be its mascot, a graceful ornament that typified its hopes, but now the mascot was in a fair way to becoming a skilled driver of the car.

India came next, a very different India from the respectful country that his father and grandfather knew. This was an exercise in quite another manner, with more guards, more circumspection, more formality and less chances of departure from official programmes into reality. He had told Bombay that "I want you to know me, and I want to know you." But that was not easy with the little shadow of Mr Gandhi across his path and an anxious hedge of police *lathis* lining both sides of it. Sometimes, indeed, he plunged courageously into a racecourse crowd or rode slowly through the packed Punjabis at Lahore. But these were little more than rare exceptions to a royal progress in the older manner. For India in 1922 was not susceptible of treatment by his own more intimate technique.

This was resumed in the next year, which saw him on holiday at Calgary in his chosen character of a Western rancher. For the empire, which had been his task, was now his pastime. He felt that he belonged there; and his new property, the E.P. Ranch, satisfied his aspiration to be just an ordinary resident rather than an august and transitory visitor, as he had once craved to be an under-

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graduate among undergraduates, a soldier among soldiers. He felt reality beneath his feet as an Alberta farmer, and that was better than red carpets. For he was twenty-nine and knew his tastes. They brought him to the West again for a second ranching holiday and on to the United States in the high days of Mr Coolidge's prosperity. Then the last stage of his imperial hegira was resumed, and he was claimed by Africa—first, West Africa with an abundance of native ceremonial, and then South Africa with Afrikanders, Englishmen and native races intertwined in a highly complicated tapestry affording ampler opportunities than exist elsewhere in the British Empire for saying and doing the wrong thing. He heard the Taal; he heard the deep Zulu "*Bayete!*"; he watched school children, ex-service men, Barotse tribesmen and Dutch undergraduates, each in their due order according to his programme; and he discharged his duties under watching eyes that took slight account of what he had been doing earlier or would be doing later in the day, provided only that he acted faultlessly the part he had to play for them. The programme was his master, and he served it loyally. Occasionally, though, he gave them something that was not in the official programme. As his train drew into a way station in the Karoo, he saw the waiting escort of Dutch farmers in civilian clothes of uniform antiquity and varied cut, all mounted and prepared to ride beside the royal cars into the little town. It was just such a gathering as once—with Bible, coffeepot and Mauser rifle—had confronted his great-grandmother's soldiers; and with a deft inversion of South Africa's eventful history the Prince of Wales, discarding motor transport, mounted somebody's spare horse and galloped into Oudtshoorn at the dusty head of a Boer commando. Small wonder that the little town rocked to the cheers that marked an inspired departure from the official programme.

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That was his forte. The programme was his master; but masters could be disobeyed, if their instructions departed too far from reality. His manners were completely natural. A growing knowledge of the ordinary man gave him an understanding of what his audience had come out to see; and a vivid sense of the occasion (when it was a real occasion, and not a meaningless formality) told him what it was all about. In consequence his public appearances lost the customary character of royal epiphanies, which were apt to have more in common with the exhibition of a sacred picture that inclined its head, lifted its hand and uttered consecrated formulæ than with the movements of a human being. For he was always more a person than a personage; and this circumstance occasionally led to imperfections in the ritual, when the royal ikon abandoned its Byzantine pose and acted on a human impulse. Here was an ikon that was capable of thinking for itself; and though the official hierarchy was sometimes dismayed by his departure from a sacred text or variations of official vestments, it began to dawn on the assembled worshippers that he was thinking and that his thought marched in step with theirs. They had come out to see a sacred effigy, a small embodiment of England officially provided with the proper thing to say and the right uniform to wear; and when they found instead an active man with a strong tendency to wear ordinary clothes and seek ordinary pleasures, who asked them searching questions and even listened to their answers, it was not easy to set limits to their gratified emotions. Awe yielded to surprise; surprise turned to relief; and as relief swelled to enthusiasm, the Prince of Wales was lifted to unprecedented heights of popularity along his endless and congested route. His performance of the part, perhaps, was not traditional. But how many traditions had survived the war? And which of them could hope to breathe the thinner and more

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stimulating air of the new countries overseas? Here was a modern version of an ancient text, an old favourite brought up to date. His instinct and his training made personal additions to the role that ensured him an astonishing success; and the prince's travels, which had been devised for the completion of his education or the due discharge of a dynastic duty, left him at thirty one of the two or three most popular men in the whole world.

That figure was remembered, too, as he paced slowly in his father's funeral and they recalled the crowded years of his imperial odyssey, when, ubiquitous and smiling, he had filled the world with the bright image of the Prince of Wales. It was a memorable role, which he had played to crowded houses in every quarter of the globe—first in America, then Australasia and Africa, and after Africa a swift experiment outside the limits of the British Empire in Argentina and Chile. He had been chosen formerly to embody all their memories of home to British subjects overseas. But now he represented Britain before the wider audiences of a foreign world in South America. The test was more exacting. But such visits were his *métier* (there was one more trip to Canada in company with Mr Baldwin, whose informality of costume plumbed even greater depths than his); and they were his pastimes as well. For his Alberta holidays were duplicated by a shooting trip to East Africa, on which he seemed to show equal inclinations towards cinecamera shots and the more royal note of express rifles. But the shadow of the throne fell suddenly across his path as his father's illness brought him swiftly back—five thousand miles in ten days—and the prince found himself at home again.

That sudden homecoming in 1928 seemed to mark a stage in his career. It made it clear that he could not be Prince of Wales forever. The throne itself was closer now; and though it ended this time in his father's slow

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recovery and convalescence, it was plain that at no distant date the prince's duties would lie nearer home. Not that all of them had hitherto been discharged overseas. For he had spent the greater part of nearly every year in England; and his role was almost as ubiquitous at home. They learned to know him in the duchy and on the duchy's London property at Kennington and in North Wales and the West Riding and the Notts coal field and the Potteries and on Tyneside. He acquired the painful art of public speaking in an unsheltered school that sloped down from the relative security of Guildhall and the Mansion House—safe heights of careful preparation and official utterances—by way of war memorials unveiled and public banquets duly blessed, to all the risks that wait upon impromptu speakers (whom tomorrow's papers will report in full) at Toc H and East End clubs and wayside gatherings in industrial areas. They came to know his brisk manner up and down the country, to restrict the formal parts of his reception and to answer all his questions if they could.

His earlier engagements had a strong ex-service flavour, since he was the most exalted member of that fraternity. Besides, the vast majority of his acquaintances among his fellow subjects had been made in France, and wartime associations were the basis of his unnumbered contacts. That circumstance, however, scarcely lent a military character to his appearances in public. Indeed, they were essentially civilian. For the British Legion, though it had won all the medals in the world, wore no uniform. They had been civilians before the war made soldiers of them; and now they were civilians once again. That was the class to which the Prince of Wales belonged. He shared their memories of active service, their sane prejudice against parade and the hope of all of them for an improving world in which they might enjoy a comfortable future.

That modest aspiration coloured all his outlook. In

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time of war it had seemed reasonable to care for their dependents, and when the war was over, they expected to return to good homes and steady work. But their hopes were largely unfulfilled through no fault of their own; and when the prospect faded and the skies of industry were darkened by cruel economic accidents, he shared their disappointment, and the alleviation of their undeserved distress became his primary concern. Enlightened royalty had done its best among the poor in England ever since Prince Albert first attended meetings of benevolent societies. But its effort came almost inevitably from above. It knew the cause was good; it knew the public-spirited (and quite often well-connected) workers on the platform; but as it looked out across the sea of faces it did not know very much about the poor themselves. That lesson came to the Prince of Wales through his association with ex-service men. For he approached the problem from a new angle. Besides, his tendency had always been to look beyond the reception committee. He saw the men he knew—or others indistinguishable from the men he knew—in want; he saw them in their rather pitiable homes or in their only slightly less pitiable clubs; he saw the places where they worked or, still worse, the places where there was no work for them to do. It was an enormous and depressing object lesson; and as he learned it, it began to dawn upon him that the social problem was something more than the judicious rearrangement of some bald statistics in the tray that waited for the impersonal attention of a busy minister. For each figure on the sheet was a home like one that he had been in, each score of them a row of houses like a shabby street that he had walked down with a retinue of grubby children and a lifted hat. Those were the realities; and he knew what it was all about, since he had come upon the problem from below. A social conscience was a most unusual addition to the

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make-up of a prince. It lent a new depth to his activities, and it multiplied his contacts with a world in which princes were unusual visitors. For once again he looked beyond the circle of uniformed attendants to a wider world of ordinary people without uniforms, who elbowed one another in the streets to see him pass. This circumstance affected his own outlook, and it transformed the image of him which left upon the public mind the well-remembered figure of the Prince of Wales. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, when male costume lost its colour, tradition had dictated that royalty should frequently appear in public with its dignity enhanced by naval or military uniform. As the years went by, its duties became increasingly civilian. There were less and less reviews, and more and more foundation stones. But this transformation left the royal wardrobe almost unmodified; and royal admirals performed the peaceful ceremonial of opening new docks, while royal generals inaugurated harmless bridges. The picturesque anomaly survived, and the Prince of Wales could wear his uniforms upon occasion. But the less formal aspects of his public work seemed to demand a simpler outfit, since spurs are out of place in slums and swords are awkward things to handle at pit heads. Besides, his generation had worn uniform on active service, and the less they saw of it after the Armistice, the better they were pleased. That, perhaps, was his ex-service prejudice; and the differentiation which a uniform implied was little to his taste, since he asked nothing more than to be a soldier among soldiers and a civilian among civilians. So the aspect of royalty was modernised in the person of the Prince of Wales; and they came to know a trim figure in a short jacket and a bowler hat (enlivened sometimes by a rather garish overcoat), who walked a little faster than his hosts and wore without parade the inconspicuous insignia of civilian royalty.

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Civilian no less his attitude to what he saw. For his experience abroad had taught him lessons wholly unconnected with the armed forces of the Crown, by which royal horizons had once been comfortably bounded. He had travelled half the trade routes of the world; and at the end of them he met men whose conversation ran far beyond the normal topics of exalted quarters nearer home. The younger nations are preoccupied with simple problems of commerce and production; for if they are to live, the world must be induced to take large quantities of grain, meat, minerals and wool. That was the basis of their whole existence; and an attentive visitor could hardly fail to learn a broad lesson in applied economics. So he became aware of business, of the mysterious activities of those unromantic figures who had hitherto impinged on royal lives only as large subscribers to good causes or in the unbecoming robes of civic dignity.

Here was an immense addition to his civilian training. For he acquired a working notion of what the vast majority of ordinary people really did all day, and what it signified, and how they earned a living, and what happened to them when they failed to do so. He saw the cattle moving slowly under wide Alberta skies; and the stores in Calgary told him what happened when they found no market. Sydney acquainted him with the uncertainties of wool, and Winnipeg informed him for what purpose wheat is grown. He heard about crops, land development and markets, since these are the glories of new countries and no visitor could be permitted to depart without a rough idea of the imposing future waiting for each favoured portion of the earth.

This was his education in the business realities of empire, a marked advance upon the old simplicities when royal life held little more than a few guards of honour to inspect and a few wards in hospitals to walk through. His survey took a wider range; and where his predecessors had not

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been expected to do much more than to produce working imitations of a field marshal or a district visitor on the appropriate occasions, he faced a stiffer test. A social conscience had replaced the mild interest in good works which had been customary in royal circles, and his introduction to the British Empire at its ordinary places of business instructed him in matters that lay far beyond the range of knowledge prevalent among field marshals. For he came to see the empire less as a chain of garrisons or coaling stations and more as a business concern. That, after all, was what it really was. Higher principles, perhaps, induced its peoples to cohere; but without business they would not be there at all. This lesson, plainly written on the broad face of every country that he visited, stayed with the prince. It gave him a respect for business and for businessmen unusual in ruling circles. He seemed to recognise that, in the last analysis, the empire was a civilian affair operated on commercial principles, and a working knowledge of them completed the equipment of a modern prince.

Modernity became his note. First of his family, he had not passed half his life under the shadow of Queen Victoria. His spirited grandfather, Edward VII, had been partly darkened by her small, impending figure; and even his father surrendered to that influence. Had not a sympathetic courtier noted how George V at his accession "loves to renew his Grandmother's habits in all things. . . . We are back in Victorian times"? Not so the Prince of Wales. He seemed to represent a later epoch, by which his great-grandmother was—sometimes a shade abruptly—relegated to her place in history. Asked to describe her by a Spanish-speaking visitor to Windsor Castle, he once replied that she was "*muy vieja*." If so, if that was how she had impressed him, her place was in the past; for that is where the very old belong. But his was plainly in the present.

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He had modernised the aspect of his rank; he knew a good deal more about the world in which he lived than those around him; he began to fly; he was amused by the same things that entertained his own contemporaries—by saxophones, trap drums and small congested dance floors. He shared their passion for excessive exercise. Sometimes, indeed, he sought it with so much ardour that his horsemanship inspired irreverence in transatlantic comic papers and questions in the House of Commons. For the public mind was unaccustomed to the spectacle of royal activities that went much beyond the stationary joys of grouse shooting. But his was a more restless figure. No generation worked harder or played harder than that to which the prince belonged. The work he did was real enough; and it was not surprising if the recreation which he sought was just as real. He worked as hard as they did and, when time permitted, he could play as hard. Dancing, golf, steeplechasing, squash rackets and the hunting field afforded him successive outlets in the best contemporary mode. For he was nothing if not in the contemporary picture; and there in the very centre of it they could see the busy figure of a cheerful bachelor.

At one time they had seemed to mind the fact that he was still obstinately single. For there is an irresistible appeal in royal wedding bells, an even stronger appetite for royal nurseries. The dynastic advantages of marriage were obvious. But as the years went by, his public work appeared to earn him a reprieve. They seemed to recognise that work on such a scale entitled him to the same freedom of choice in this vital matter as was enjoyed by his fellow subjects, and his hesitations had their sympathy. One king of England had "lamented the fate of princes to be in matters of marriage of far worse sort than the condition of poor men," remarking with one glance at Anne of Cleves that "Princes take as is brought them by

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others, and poor men be commonly at their own choice." The public mind, indeed, almost concurred in *Mr Dooley's* sage reflection that "'tis no aisy job bein' a King barrin' th' fact that ye don't have to marry th' woman iv ye'er choice but th' woman iv somebody else's. 'Tis like takin' a contrhact an' havin' th' union furnish th' foreman an' th' mateeryal." That, they guessed, might be his point of view as well; and they were content to wait until his choice impelled him irresistibly to matrimony. Not that they treated this absorbing topic with any undue reticence. The annual migrations of princesses were closely followed as a titillating theme for rumour. But their invariable safe return left few regrets; and public admiration came to be reserved for the prince's skill in the avoidance of unwished-for matrimonial entanglements, as a football crowd applauds the brilliance of a fast three-quarter back swerving time and again through the opposing line to score an inevitable try between the goal posts. Besides, as they were free to choose a wife themselves, they did not grudge a corresponding freedom to the prince; and if he preferred to postpone the choice, they were not prepared to quarrel with his decision. After all, it was an age when youth (at thirty-four) was frequently admitted to know what was good for it.

So London and the empire and the shires grew more acquainted with a royal bachelor of highly individual tastes. He led the fashion, as his grandfather had led it when Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, was the arbiter of late Victorian elegance. It followed where he chose to lead; and a slightly puckish preference for innovation in male costume involved his copyists in a revival of straw hats, in highly emphatic tweeds, in incandescent Fair Isle sweaters, in the questionable combination of dinner jackets with white waistcoats. These gay variations on familiar themes were the outward signs of his social leadership, and society

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responded gratefully. It was a good many years since London had enjoyed the company of a Prince of Wales, and his easy manners made it a popular experience. There was a pleasant absence of court ritual. His callers dressed, as he did, in the normal costume of ordinary life; and his residence conformed to contemporary standards of upper-class existence. For he had steadily postponed his elevation to the more palatial interior of Marlborough House, preferring his small rooms and unobtrusive quarters at York House. It adjoined St James's Palace, but there was not much to distinguish it from any house in the West End. There was a marked absence of red carpets and marble staircases; and as his visitors sat talking to their host, they could see the houses on the other side of Cleveland Row. His choice reflected a determination to live like other people. As he worked as hard as they did, there was no compelling reason why he should not live as comfortably. Normal tastes are rarely satisfied (and often shocked) by royal residences; and there is no discomfort equal to the majestic inconvenience of palaces. So York House remained his London residence. It was quite sufficient for his needs; and the same obstinately normal taste impelled his choice of recreations. For society received him as a welcome leader, and the West End of London came to know the gay figure of a Prince of Wales off duty.

But duty claimed him with redoubled emphasis after his father's grave illness. Ulysses' homecoming was anything but restful, since his official services as king's deputy were more in demand than ever. The little office at York House was in continual activity; callers accumulated in the waiting room; and he endured a daily grind of interviews behind the window in Cleveland Row. There was a growing sense of his increased responsibilities. His relaxations were curtailed. Now there were no more

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point-to-points, and the prince's hunters left Melton Mowbray for the auctioneer. Even his work was more elaborately undertaken now. It had been decided to reinforce the normal resources of British diplomacy in a field of high importance to British interests with a comprehensive visit by the Prince of Wales to South America. Few men embark on a new foreign language at thirty-six, and book learning had never been his forte. But his preparations for the tour included an unsparing course of Spanish, in which he attained sufficient fluency to gratify an enthusiastic continent with the unexpected spectacle of a *criollo* prince. Local idioms were presently acquired with the same gusto with which he had once adopted local hats, and delighted Argentines recognised their own mispronunciations of the Spanish language.

The underlying problems of the tour appealed to his commercial aptitude. For it was all so much a question of crops and marketing, of the ability of Argentine *estancieros* to raise beef for English tables and the capacity of British exporters for selling goods that South Americans would buy. These were the sensible realities of international relations in time of peace, a zone of sanity in which the prince could make an effective contribution that his rank denied him in the more precarious field of foreign policy. For its everyday problems appealed to his experience, and he could trace the practical connection between an engineering order for Brazil and the lives of those with whom he sympathised at home. The tour was an immense success. His cheerful blend of common sense and foreign languages ensured it, as he skimmed the continent from its northern end to Chile, crossed the Andes into Argentina, and captivated Buenos Aires by opening an Empire Exhibition in the language of those for whom the exhibition was intended. This was a sensational advance upon the customary reticence of English salesmanship, which left

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shrewd American competitors reflecting ruefully upon the practical utility of ancient institutions in modern hands.

His South American success increased the prince's stature. Hitherto his work had been almost exclusively performed within the more restricted field of British territory, where custom and tradition limited the effect he could produce. But now he played a larger part before a wider audience. For when he appeared on foreign soil, he was no longer the first subject of the Crown or an ex-service man of rank or the landlord of the duchy tenants. Those had been his roles at home. But when South America received the prince, he spoke for Britain. The larger character appeared to suit him, and an individual performance of high quality left an indelible impression upon his audiences overseas. Another circumstance increased his confidence after the tour of 1931. For the experience enabled him to speak with authority at home upon important matters about which few Englishmen knew very much, although their national significance was obvious. Hereafter South America seemed to become his ward. A sound grasp of British interests (and the limitations of British salesmanship) stayed with him; and in the ensuing years the prince was always ready to impress his fellow countrymen with the significance of South America, seven million square miles of friendly territory waiting to do business with the world. He had learned his lesson well, and he retained it both, it seemed, for its own importance and because South America was the first conquest of his maturity.

For he was nearing forty now, and men of twice his age were lucky if they had seen half as much. That training was a fair substitute for greying hair. His looks were still obstinately boyish but he was a good deal older than he looked. Experience increased his tendency to think for himself and to form positive opinions about such things as foreign markets, emigration and the lamentable tendency

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of Englishmen abroad—and even English diplomats—to keep themselves to themselves. These were frequently expressed in official action and in public speeches which bore the speaker's stamp. For as the circle of his interests grew wider, they imparted a reality to many of the duties which the Prince of Wales was called upon to do. There was still an uninteresting residue of mere formalities. But now he seemed to see where he could be of public use. He had formed his own conception of his office, and it kept him busy with affairs related to his own experience. His callers at York House knew, as they sat on the sofa opposite, that somebody was listening to what they said with shrewd attention rather than with the weary courtesy of a constitutional abstraction; and his audiences in unprosperous localities learned that his utterances meant something more than a polite expression of official sympathy with their unfortunate condition. That was his singular achievement. For almost alone in the official world, they seemed to know him, to wonder how he was getting on up there, to feel without surprise that he knew tolerably well how they were getting on themselves. One evening in a city hall the Archbishop of Canterbury paid majestic tribute "to his manifold public services for all that belongs to our common life, for the sick and not least for the unemployed, and for that embassy of Empire, which the prince fulfils in every part of the world, and, I begin to think, in almost every language. . . . It is no exaggeration to say that future historians will look to the prince's speeches to learn the best that can be said of the industrial, social and commercial life of his day and generation." But his real achievement was that he left millions of his fellow subjects with a feeling that they knew the Prince of Wales.

After four years of war and seventeen of public life that was the impression he had made. It was to be found across the sea in Canada and large sections of the United

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States, in Australasia and Argentina and Africa, south, east and west, and in all classes (and both sexes) of the community at home. Perhaps the ex-service tie was not quite so strong as it had been a few years earlier; for as the Armistice receded and memories began to fade, hair grew a trifle thinner and age began to claim the young men of 1918. But their fraternity had been replaced by a more widespread emotion, by the common feeling of so many ordinary people that they knew the Prince of Wales. They had seen him, bareheaded and smiling, on innumerable occasions—at parades, golf championships and public meetings, in back streets and exhibitions and boys' clubs and town halls and hospitals. He had driven past them with a lifted hat or stopped to speak to them or laughed at something that they would have laughed at. For he seemed to think the things that they were thinking, whether the occasion was a business meeting at which he briskly took the chair or a banquet where the speeches went on a shade too long. They had watched him play his part. Sometimes it was the leading role and sometimes a secondary part, as he drove in his father's Jubilee procession cheerfully effaced by an enormous bearskin beside the lorgnette of a royal aunt. They always seemed to know what he was thinking, since he was interested by so many of the things that interested them, enlivened by the same amusements and bored by the same tedium that afflicted normal persons. It was just like him, they felt, to fly to London after his accession and to return to Sandringham without the aimless inconvenience of a special train. They knew the Prince of Wales so well, and now that he was king, they seemed to know him just the same. For that well-remembered figure lived in their memory; and as it passed before them in the long column of his father's funeral, behind the generals and before the princes, they felt that there was somebody they knew in the procession.

II

Washington, D.C.

WHAT would the President do next? A modern king in London was matched beyond the ocean by a highly modern president; and America asked itself the question daily in streetcars, homes, offices, newspaper articles, radio speeches, parlour cars, board rooms, filling stations, clubs and country stores. It was asked in every tone from apprehension to a fervent hope, and it received a fine diversity of answers. What would the President do next? A high proportion of the questioners were not altogether sure, but trusted that he would go on the way that he was going. That simple view predominated in streetcars and country stores and homes below a certain rental value. But offices, while candidly confessing that they had voted for him in 1932 and that he had done a good job in the ensuing crisis, were not quite so certain; and clubs abandoned themselves to a cheerful orgy of denunciation, founded on the circumstance that he was believed to be threatening something mysteriously termed the American way of life by heading simultaneously in the two directions of Fascism and Communism, a highly complicated evolution indicated by his annoying tendency to overtax them and to tell them how to run their businesses. Indeed, they were not sure of very much in the prevalent

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confusion, and they had not the slightest notion what the President was going to do next. But the one certainty that failed to comfort them was the disturbing knowledge that he was going to do something.

That, it was only fair to say, was just about what they had wanted him to do for them when they elected him three years before. America in 1933 was sick. The economic consequences of the peace were no less painful when they crossed the ocean than they had been in Europe; and the unplanned paradise of Mr Coolidge's prosperity collapsed with violence upon the unresponsive head of Mr Hoover. That had been in 1929, when the bottom dropped incontinently out of the stock market and in the succeeding months the wheels of enterprise checked and came gradually to a standstill from Maine to California. The Depression had arrived. Its immediate causes were financial and consequently veiled in the slight obscurity that always broods over finance. Wall Street was, perhaps, the one facet of America to which Lord Bryce had somehow failed to give adequate attention in his classical analysis. But the underlying causes of the ensuing crisis did not escape his prescience. "America," he wrote, "in her swift onward progress, sees, looming on the horizon and now no longer distant, a time of mists and shadows, wherein dangers may lie concealed whose form and magnitude she can scarcely yet conjecture. As she fills up her western regions with inhabitants, she sees the time approach when all the best land, even that which the extension of irrigation has made available, will have been occupied, and when the land now under cultivation will have been so far exhausted as to yield scantier crops even to more expensive culture. Although transportation may also have then become cheaper, the price of food will rise; farms will be less easily obtained and will need more capital to work them with profit; the struggle for existence will become

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more severe. And while the outlet which the West now provides for the overflow of the great cities will have become less available, the cities will have become immensely more populous; pauperism, now confined to some six or seven of the greatest, may be more widely spread; and even if wages do not sink work may be less abundant. In fact the chronic evils and problems of old societies and crowded countries, such as we see them today in Europe, will have reappeared on this new soil, while the demand of the multitude to have a larger share of the nation's collective wealth may well have grown more insistent. High economic authorities pronounce that the beginnings of this time of pressure lie not more than twenty years ahead. . . ." His sage prediction was launched in 1913; and the events which proved it right arrived just four years ahead of his timetable.

The gay haphazard of an economic order founded on belief in the enlightened beneficence of independent businessmen raced cheerfully with all sails set towards the hurricane. A happy anarchy had served America through the long period of growth; and success stories based on the complacent ideology of Samuel Smiles had helped to blind society to the dangers to which it was exposed by leaving the path of unlimited advancement open to poor, uneducated boys with unusual powers of acquisition, and to the vast disparity which yawned between two per cent of the population owning two thirds of its wealth and two thirds of the population owning one twentieth. That disproportion was full of menace; and when disaster came, it served to emphasise the maladjustment. For the gale struck in 1929; and the whole vessel, with its injudicious spread of canvas and its cargo badly trimmed, heeled perilously over. The sudden impact of Depression scattered the paper fortunes of the speculative "Gold diggers of 1929." But now there was no West for them to go to,

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no American expansion to absorb their energies, and small hope of foreign trade in a dislocated world of bankrupt nations carefully surrounded by high tariff walls. The stone dropped by fate into the stock market that autumn set up a ripple which became a tidal wave, engulfing all unwary navigators on those disastrously alluring waters and invading the dry land of normal enterprise until no single corner of America remained above the flood and eleven million citizens were left without a job to do.

That was the nemesis of economic happy-go-lucky. America had always liked to take a chance; but in 1929 it had taken it just once too often. They had been content to follow the shrewd self-interest of able businessmen in a swift march towards the Promised Land, and earlier contingents of Americans had often got there. But this time there was something wrong. No Promised Land appeared in sight, and the wayfarers were appalled to feel the solid earth of money values and employment fail beneath their feet. Without the slightest warning they were left to struggle in a rising sea of unemployment; and it was no consolation that many of their wealthier guides were drowning with them, still less that an austere avoidance of collectivist machinery had steadfastly refrained from providing anything so demoralising as lifesaving apparatus. America was wholly unprepared for the disaster. There were no means of ascertaining how many people were involved or, if they could be located, of doing anything for them beyond the spasmodic improvisations of local charity. For the social order had scarcely passed beyond the primitive epoch of individual authority; and in the Depression economic Czarism seemed to face its 1917. But, luckily or not, there was no Lenin waiting.

At the moment the fortunes of the United States reposed upon the knees of Mr Hoover. For that eminently practical career had landed him in the White House as

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Mr Coolidge's successor and heir presumptive to the prosperity which bore his predecessor's name. But less confident, perhaps, than the electors and reluctant to risk a repetition of that happy miracle, the cautious Mr Coolidge had declined a further term of office. Like Chantecler, he had crowed once (if Mr Coolidge could be said to crow), and a respectful nation saw the sun rise obediently; but he left the privilege of crowing for the second time to Mr Hoover. So when the sun conspicuously failed to rise at all, there was an unreasonable feeling that it was Mr Hoover's fault. Not his alone, perhaps, since Mr Hoover was a party leader; and his party, which had enjoyed a high degree of credit for American prosperity in the years following the war, duly received the blame when it evaporated. For in the happy days of Mr Harding and Mr Coolidge the Republicans had given; and in Mr Hoover's more distressing epoch the Republicans, it seemed, had taken away. Blessed therefore was the name of the one available alternative, the Democratic party.

European eyes are frequently bewildered by the party scene in the United States, where parties seem to change their names as easily as hats on Hampstead Heath and their basic principles with the gay abandon of partners in a country dance. Yet there was an underlying difference, since the historic accident of their Southern heritage aligned the Democrats behind free trade and States' rights in opposition to high tariffs and the growth of Federal authority, while Republicans faced in the opposite direction. The march of history in the half century following the Civil War had favoured the Republicans. Only two Democrats sat in the White House between Appomattox and Château Thierry with the natural result that their followers became a fretful Opposition party with a strong negative ingredient in their beliefs. Indeed, the facts seemed almost to confirm *Mr. Dooley's* wistful diagnosis, when he informed his faithful in-

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terlocutor that "Years ago, Hinmissy, manny years ago, they was a race between th' dimmycrats an' th' raypublicans f'r to see which shud have a choice iv principles. Th' dimmycrats lost. I dinnaw why. Mebbe they stopped to take a dhrink. Annyhow, they lost. Th' raypublicans come up an' they choose th' 'we commind' principles, an' they was nawthin' left f'r the dimmycrats but th' 'we denounce an' deplores.' I dinnaw how it come about, but th' dimmycrats didn't like th' way th' thing shtud, an' so they fixed it up between thim that whichever won at th' iliction shud commind an' congratulate, an' thim that lost shud denounce an' deplore. An' so it's been, on'y the dimmycrats has had so little chanct f'r to do annything but denounce an' deplore that they've almost lost th' use iv other wurruds." That melancholy fate beset them through the long period of exile from the smiling land of office, a depressing era in which "th' dimmycrats ar-re right an' the raypublicans has th' jobs." For they roamed in outer darkness while the light of public favour shone upon their happy rivals; and one after another unsuccessful Democratic candidates, each in his own fashion, behaved just like the Hibernian seer's vision of Mr Bryan in the discharge of his party duties, when he "sets down to a typewriter, an' denounces an' deplores till th' hired man blows th' dinner horn. When he can denounce an' deplore no longer he views with alarm an' declares with indignation."

This barren interlude of Opposition engaged the Democrats, until Woodrow Wilson's stimulating advent brought his party into a more direct relation with the realities of American life. As the nineteenth century advanced, a railroad age (when presidents of the United States were frequently of far less practical significance than railroad presidents) was followed by an age of bankers, which in its turn merged imperceptibly into an age of vast industrial combines; and the concentration of property and economic

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power proceeded steadily to the irrelevant accompaniment of politics that dealt with other (and far less essential) matters. True, there was a vague memory that Andrew Jackson had once tried a fall with the bankers of an earlier day; and high-minded agriculturists intermittently denounced the financial depravity of city dwellers, while the inherent complications of the currency question became entangled in the flowing hair of Mr Bryan's eloquence. But politicians were not encouraged to dwell upon such things before Theodore Roosevelt (who needed no encouragement to use strong language upon unexpected topics) informed an audience one Independence Day at Springfield, Illinois, that "a man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards. More than that no man is entitled to, and less than that no man shall have."

This was highly unusual language for a Republican to use. But Mr Roosevelt, who was capable upon occasion of disrespectful references to "the wealthy criminal class" and "malefactors of great wealth," was rarely usual and not always (by close party tests) strictly Republican; and in the last years of the century the public mind began to face the fundamental problems of economic privilege. New questions forced their way into political debates; and presently Mr Roosevelt's Square Deal was matched by Mr Wilson's New Freedom, a thoughtful Democrat's response to the same set of questions. For politics were now concerned with larger issues than the old contest between an invariably victorious Tweedledum and an eternally protesting Tweedledee. The slow swing of the pendulum, so long deferred, brought back a Democrat to the White House; and Woodrow Wilson set himself to replace the economic law of the jungle with the "rule of justice and right." But at an early stage of these promising activities the war intervened, diverting him to attempt

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something of the same kind in the field of international relations, where the need was even more acute. This larger enterprise, however, overstrained both Mr Wilson and his people's appetite for altruistic effort. His failure exiled the Democrats from Washington again; and they were back once more at their accustomed lodges in the wilderness when the gale of 1929 struck Mr Hoover.

Its force increased as the succeeding years went by; and his apparent inability to control the swiftly spreading flood of devastation rendered it extremely probable that his successor would be a Democrat once more. The Democratic nominee was Franklin Roosevelt, a distant relative of his stormy namesake, who had shown laudably progressive tendencies as Governor of New York. His social standing was unquestioned, and in his early years this handsome product of Groton and Harvard resembled in no small degree the male companion of the contemporary Gibson Girl. But his political ancestry was more disturbing, since his principles unmistakably derived from those elements in public life which questioned the prevailing sanctity of business methods. Bearing the name of Roosevelt (a cause of sad confusion to dutiful Republicans), he inherited the brave challenge once uttered by his more impulsive cousin to the dark powers of finance and industry; and service under Mr Wilson, whose chair adorned his study at Hyde Park, sealed him in the line of Democratic succession. He confessed, indeed, that he had "always felt that the surge of the previous twenty years caused by these two great personalities was by no means dead." For Square Deal and New Freedom were equally mixed in his composition; and when he evolved a formula "in accordance with our more modern concept of the democratic process," it was not surprising that the Democratic National Convention heard him pledge his hearers and himself to a New Deal.

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Its practical proposals were still largely undefined, but students of his campaign speeches could already discern the underlying notions. His opening invocation to "the great indomitable, unquenchable, progressive soul of our Commander-in-Chief, Woodrow Wilson" betrayed the sources of his inspiration; and the main objective of his policy was "the forgotten man at the bottom of the economic pyramid." How he was to be reached and rescued was not quite so plain. But from the candidate's frequent and appreciative references to wartime expedients it began to be apparent that his methods were likely to be drastic. For he alluded favourably to "plans like those of 1917" and established disparaging comparisons between Mr Hoover's policy and "that devised to meet the emergency of war fifteen years ago. We met specific situations with considered, relevant measures of constructive value. There were the War Industries Board, the Food and Fuel Administration, the War Trade Board, the Shipping Board. . . ." This cheerful evocation of the administrative spectres of the World War made it plain that Franklin Roosevelt was likely to attack his problems with more than academic fervour and without undue regard to technical obstructions. The lines of his attack were scarcely preconceived, since he asserted gaily that "the country needs, and, unless I mistake its temper, the country demands bold, persistent experimentation. It is common sense to take a method and try it: if it fails, admit it frankly and try another. But above all, try something."

All that he asked for was authority to try; and it was already manifest that the experiment would be on a larger scale than the customary sectional expedients by which a stricken West or an unprosperous South was apt to mend its fortunes at the expense of an unduly solvent East. For Mr Roosevelt was acutely conscious that the United States formed a single nation; and as Lincoln had informed

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them once that their government could not endure permanently half slave and half free, he applied the same unitary principle to its economics and asserted that "this Nation cannot endure if it is half 'boom' and half 'broke.'" This time there was to be no tragic fissure, no division of the United States into rival areas confronting one another with conflicting interests; and in case the urban and industrial worker felt inclined to view with equanimity the calamities of his rural fellow citizens, he received due warning from Mr Roosevelt that "his own employment is directly tied up with the farmer's dollar. No Nation can long endure half-bankrupt. Main Street, Broadway, the mills, the mines will close if half the buyers are broke."

America was sick; and in the presidential campaign of 1932 he asked them for a doctor's mandate, for authority to apply any practicable remedies to the growing horror of Depression. It was ungrudgingly conceded by the electors. But the cure could not begin at once, since the Constitution imposed a futile interlude of months, in which conditions went from bad to worse under the nominal authority of an outgoing president. Here was, perhaps, an indication that the world of 1933 moved faster than George Washington's, that there might even be things which the Founding Fathers had not foreseen. For as the statutory months went by, disaster deepened and the whole economic structure of society was not far from breaking point over large portions of the country. Savings vanished as banks started to succumb, and a sporadic revolt of rural mortgagors began to render legal obligations unenforceable. The new President took office in a nightmare week of breaking banks, and the experiment began. His inaugural announced with a pardonable cry of triumph that "the money changers have fled from their high seats in the temple of our civilization"; and strict formalists were warned that "an unprecedented demand and need for undelayed action may call for tem-

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porary departure from that normal balance of public procedure." Indeed, the legislature received plain notice that if Congress failed to play its part in the emergency, the President would ask "for the one remaining instrument to meet the crisis—broad Executive power to wage a war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe." Depression was the enemy; and his leading lawyer had advised that the Trading with the Enemy Act of 1917 was still in force. So Mr Roosevelt applied wartime powers and methods to the situation of 1933. The United States were governed, in effect, by "Dora" without benefit of clergy; and while Congress panted hopefully behind legitimising what was done, the President continued to erupt new measures like a beneficent volcano.

In such a crisis almost all authority for action lay with the President. He had, it was true, a Cabinet. But incoming Cabinets of parties that have long been out of office are full of unfamiliar faces; and even at a later stage in the life of his administration a disrespectful lyric writer could aver with fair accuracy that

*Roper and Wallace, and all of the rest
Are unknown in the East and the same in the West.
But Perkins and Farley,
And Farley and Perkins,
Know all of your business and all of its workin's—
Do Perkins and Farley,
And Farley and Perkins,
Yes, Perkins and Farley,
And Farley and Perkins,
Do Perkins and Farley and Hull.*

The star role fell, beyond dispute, to the President; and he was admirably qualified to play it. The first issue in any presidential campaign had long been the personal

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question, for in American politics the standard bearer was of almost more significance than the standard which he bore. In the first instance, the choice of candidates was frequently determined by those engaging qualities of personality by which great party gatherings are captivated; and when these mastodons of charm encountered one another in the supreme struggle of a presidential campaign, elections were apt to be decided by a winning way, a profile, and, above all, a voice. Mr Roosevelt had an incomparable voice; and when the best broadcasting manner in the United States was combined with public knowledge of a heroic triumph over physical disablement and an almost inexhaustible capacity for sustained geniality, the result could hardly be in doubt.

But the utility of these resources was not confined to winning the election. They had been successful in persuading vast numbers of his countrymen to make him President; and now they were directed to a more protracted effort to persuade them that what the President might choose to do in the emergency was right. That was the second stage in Mr Roosevelt's domination of the public mind, a phenomenon strikingly foreseen by the sagacious Bryce when he expressed "doubt if there be any country where a really brilliant man, confident in his own strength, and adding the charm of a striking personality to the gift of popular eloquence, would find an easier path to fame and power, and would exert more influence over the minds and emotions of the multitude. Such a man, speaking to the people with the independence of conscious strength, would find himself appreciated and respected."

Such a man was Franklin Roosevelt; and appreciation and respect were a meagre estimate of the feelings with which his countrymen regarded him. The wheel of politics, turned by the floodwaters of Depression, had brought him into office. But his personal resources ensured a more

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enduring triumph, and they had received a notable addition from the march of science. For where the press had almost seemed to be the master of Bryce's America, that role was now transferred to radio.

Had not Mr Gladstone once opined that in any contest between the platform and the press success would ultimately crown the platform? But that was on the smaller stage of English politics; and the wise student of *The American Commonwealth* had noted the enormous obstacle presented by American geography to any prospect of national leadership. "What distances to be traversed, what fatigues to be encountered, before he can be a living and attractive personality to the electing masses! An English statesman leaves London at two o'clock, and speaks in Birmingham, or Leeds, or Manchester, the same evening. In a few years, every great town knows him like its own mayor, while the active local politicians who frequently run up from their homes to London hear him from the galleries of the House of Commons, wait on him in deputations, are invited to the receptions which his wife gives during the season. Even railways and telegraphs cannot make America a compact country in the same sense that Britain is." But what railways could not do in the vast distances of the United States was effortlessly done by radio.

A president had always had the right of speaking to the nation. But its formal exercise in inaugural addresses, public speeches on uncontroversial occasions and messages to Congress was a pale affair beside the new device which enabled a man sitting in the White House to be heard at every fireside in the United States. Mr Roosevelt had made frequent use of wireless for communicating with his constituents as governor of New York, and broadcast speeches played a considerable part in his election. But within a week of his inaugural, as the complicated wheels

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of the Emergency Bank Act began to revolve, the nation had its first intimation from the White House of a new presidential practice:

"The Constitution has laid upon me the duty of conveying the condition of the country to the Congress assembled at Washington. I believe I have a like duty to convey to the people themselves a clear picture of the situation at Washington itself whenever there is danger of any confusion as to what the Government is undertaking.

"That there may be a clear understanding as to just what has taken place during the last two days since the passage of this Act it is my intention, over the national radio networks, at ten o'clock Sunday evening, to explain clearly and in simple language to all of you just what has been achieved and the sound reasons which underlie this declaration to you."

That was the new departure; and on that anxious Sunday evening in March, 1933, America sat down from the Great Lakes to the Gulf to hear a radio announcer introduce the President of the United States and the rich voice at Washington begin, "I want to talk for a few minutes with the people of the United States about banking. . . ." He talked direct to them without the customary interposition of a printed page. No journalist could blur the picture with an unsympathetic headline, no Congressman could sound a party warning. That would all come afterwards, but not until the President had said what he had to say. Meanwhile his argument would reach them before any comment could attenuate its effect. Here was a lever by which American opinion was powerfully moved. For when the nation could tune in to the White House, this unbroken contact vastly enhanced the President's authority.

That authority was promptly exercised in a swift series of enactments that brought the New Deal into action.

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Private leadership had led them into the morass of 1933 and left them there. So much was obvious; and if they were to extricate themselves, it was worth trying an experiment in public leadership instead. Professor Tugwell of Columbia wrote boldly of "the usurpation by unofficial agencies of the planning power which belongs to the public" and announced that "a set of irresponsible, possibly badly trained, and certainly self-interested people half manage and half neglect affairs of whose consequences they have no adequate conception, but from which they have no hesitation in draining the last penny of profit." Why not substitute "an officially recognised social control"? That was the way that minds were tending in 1933. "It is apparent," he proclaimed, "that what may be good business may also be bad economics. Public policy will ultimately be founded on good economics, and business will have to conform." The commercial oracles were dumb. Events had stultified their endless repetition of the obvious untruth that prosperity was waiting somewhere round the corner. That comfortable message might assuage anxious listeners in 1931 or 1932, but it would scarcely do for 1933, even if anybody could be found to utter it. For the depressing truth was that the enlightened businessman, by whom America had been created out of the wilderness, had failed them in this last emergency; and there was nothing for it but state action.

The public mind was quite prepared for it. But was the state? That was the problem now. For long tradition had circumscribed the sphere of government in the United States. In the beginning a simple faith in primitive society led Jefferson to preach the virtues of a genial anarchy; and the democratic dogma seemed to hold "that government is either needless or an evil, and that with enough liberty, everything will go well." But it was plain by 1933 that liberty was not enough; and a strange irony

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required the heir of Jefferson to recognise that government must take a hand. That was conceded. Mr Roosevelt was quite prepared for an extension of the area of government on a scale which would have shocked every saint in the Democratic calendar to the point of excommunication. But where was he to find the government to do it? The public service was wholly inadequate for such an enterprise, since an unvarying distrust of experts had effectually checked its growth. For it had always been an axiom in the United States that there was nothing in the world which one man could not do just as well as another. That was democracy. So was the cautious feeling that if any officeholder stayed too long in office, he might become a menace—and that, in any case, it was someone else's turn to have the job. Those convictions, rooted deep in the American soul, had permanently obstructed the development of an effective civil service. In consequence there was a striking dearth of public servants, and their limited experience in the restricted field of government scarcely qualified them to effect a sweeping reconstruction of the whole edifice of economic life.

For that was the task facing them; and in attempting it the President was forced to improvise a public service. It was not unlike the problem which had confronted England when the war compelled her to improvise an army on the Continental scale, directed by a mushroom War Department of unprecedented size and equipped in extravagant impromptu by a vast and novel Ministry of Munitions. For America in 1933 was no less unprepared for the war against Depression. War, indeed, had been declared by acclamation. But if it was to be conducted on the lines of the President's bold strategy, he was in urgent need of administrative reinforcements. He sought them largely in those academic circles where a good deal of thought had been given to such problems; and new faces that were more

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familiar at Columbia or Harvard began to startle Washington. For the gulf that lies between the universities and contemporary life was never quite so deep in the United States as in the Old World. Had not Woodrow Wilson passed from Princeton to the White House? Besides, a strong tendency directed academic thought towards current problems, although the thinkers were currently regarded with the disrespect reserved for those who merely know about the things that other people do. There was an initial tendency to decorate them with the disparaging sobriquet of "Brain Trust." But there was something to be said for brains; and they might well be preferable to other trusts of which the country had experience. Perhaps their views were in some instances a shade advanced. But a protracted course of orthodox economics had not proved particularly rewarding; and the country watched the President without undue misgivings, as he rode with his academic Valkyries along the rainbow into the pale pink Valhalla of 1933.

They asked few questions at the outset, as the situation called for swift rescue work and drowning men do not argue with their rescuers. But it presently appeared that the President's objectives were not confined to the emergency alone. For he was disinclined to limit government activities to the administration of a few dramatic palliatives. The New Deal meant more than that; and as the nation had given him a doctor's mandate, he proceeded to attempt a cure. The patient was recovering, but if his recovery was to be lasting, the treatment must be supplemented by reform. Mr Roosevelt was quite convinced that "permanent recovery was impossible without the eradication of the economic and social maladjustments which permitted wealth and prosperity to concentrate in the control of a few, while fully a third of our population continued unable to provide themselves with decent food, clothing and

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homes." That being his conviction, it was not surprising that he embarked with vigour on an ample programme of reform, watched by the hopeful masses. Those quarters which had less to hope and more to lose developed an uneasy feeling (as diagnosed by him a few years later) "that continued reform might jeopardise continued recovery." But the transition was effected, and the receding crisis was swiftly followed by an era of reform. For the President and his collaborators were quite prepared to face (in Professor Tugwell's words) "a long, arduous, carefully planned, well-disciplined effort of construction." Opinions, perhaps, might differ as to the discipline. But there could be no doubt about its arduousness; and the old Jeffersonian dream of happy *laissez faire* was rapidly replaced by a touching faith in experts and in the almost magic healing powers of "planning," as the President proceeded gaily with the task of remodelling the economic fabric of the United States.

Its warmest admirers (and it had not many left in 1933) could scarcely deny that there was considerable room for improvement; and as his programme of reform unfolded, the vast proportion of his countrymen was willing to await results. The process of reform was far from simple, since four years is a short time in which to modernise the economic structure of a continent. That was the problem facing American reformers, who found themselves initiating social services and communal controls with which the more progressive European nations had been familiar for the past twenty years. But the slower tempo and vaster scale of life in the New World interposed enormous difficulties; and obstacles that Mr Lloyd George had taken in his stride in 1912 were almost insuperable for Mr Roosevelt in 1934. Besides, a mild instalment of State Socialism presented special difficulty in a State that was still very largely staffed by functionaries whose fitness for employ-

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ment had been determined by popular election or by political appointment.

There was so much to do and so little time in which to do it. The waters of destruction had almost closed above the head of the United States in 1933; and unless new defences were erected against the economic flood, they might return at any moment. Speed was essential; and speedy action (as British survivors of the Ministry of Munitions could have told them) is very often wasteful. But there are situations in which waste is preferable to delay. Few wars are won by strict accountancy; and if they were to win the war against Depression, there was a good deal to be said for doing something on the spot without too much regard to cost. That was the mood in which the President attacked his problems. As he had predicted, it had much in common with the wartime atmosphere of 1917. There was the same hurry, the same indifference to anything but action, the same heroic improvisations sweepingly expressed in a luxuriat proliferation of new authorities. Where Mr Wilson had created a War Industries Board and a Shipping Board and a Food and Fuel Administration, Mr Roosevelt struck the rock with the same magic staff and a startled nation saw the waters gush once more and, riding proudly on their surface, the Public Works Administration, Civilian Conservation Corps, National Recovery Administration, Tennessee Valley Authority, National Labor Relations Board, Agricultural Adjustment Administration and all the rest of his alphabetical flotilla.

It was an alarming output with a strongly wartime flavour, recalling to Americans the brave days of Woodrow Wilson, when Washington accommodated "dollar a day men" in temporary offices—the cantonments of the "Second Army of the Potomac"—and to Englishmen the excited corridors of the Hotel Metropole, where deputy controllers

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hounded munition manufacturers and the wheels of Britannia's war chariot were speeded up by Mr Lloyd George. Indeed, strong reminiscences of Mr Lloyd George seemed to haunt the whole of Mr Roosevelt's work. For one part of his task was little more than the adoption, with local variations, of those social measures which had enlivened British politics in the years just before the war. State Insurance and Old Age Pensions had once alarmed the House of Lords; and when they reappeared beyond the ocean almost a generation later in the new edifice of Social Security, this revolutionary step aligned Mr Roosevelt with Mr Lloyd George. Their wartime methods were, from the urgent nature of the problem, strikingly alike; and when the first waves of the economic storm left England in the trough of Unemployment, many of the active measures urged vainly on his countrymen by Mr Lloyd George (not unassisted by a Brain Trust of his own) bore an unmistakable resemblance to those which Mr Roosevelt was subsequently able to initiate. This is not to say that there was conscious imitation; for the same situation is apt to evoke a similar response. But it was plain to Englishmen, when Mr Roosevelt began to act, that the phenomenon was one with which they were perfectly familiar. The same solutions reappeared with many of the same defects; the same antagonists were maddened by the same political dexterity; and the same appeals for communal fair dealing, which comfortable America deplored as gratuitous incitements to class hatred, had been known to English Conservatives a generation earlier as "Limehouse."

This was no lonely thinker tapping out unwanted admonitions to an unappreciative world on Woodrow Wilson's private typewriter and outmanœuvred in the end by his worldlier antagonists. Franklin Roosevelt was cast in lighter metal, which responded infinitely better to the strains of politics. His more sinuous approach was unlikely to

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wear his strength away and to discourage his supporters by vain frontal charges against insuperable obstacles. Manœuvre was his forte; and since politics supplied the medium in which his work must be accomplished, skill in politics was no reproach to Mr Roosevelt. Lincoln, after all, whose name was safe in the brief canon of the nation's saints, had been no innocent in politics; and the political terrain had not grown simpler in the intervening seventy years. If the right, as he conceived it, was to prevail, Mr Roosevelt needed all the suppleness of a skilled politician; and happily he was not unprovided. Indeed, the President was perfectly aware of his advantages in this respect. For when an interviewer asked him whether Mr Wilson or the country had been to blame for its rejection of the League of Nations, his answer was a happy blend of modesty and pride. "That needs," the President replied, "a politician like me."

The need that Mr Wilson tragically failed to meet was no less acute for Mr Roosevelt. The Republicans had temporarily disappeared from sight, a remarkable achievement that owed more to their own leaders' shortcomings than to their opponents' skill. But the deployment of the New Deal across the face of the United States was a manœuvre calling for the utmost tactical dexterity; and all Mr Roosevelt's resources were extended to the full in the formidable business of reconciling Americans to the higher scale of sacrifice and the more rigid discipline demanded by a modern state, to say nothing of the subsidiary task of rendering substantial increases in Federal authority acceptable to Democrats. His powers of persuasion and his consummate showmanship each played their part; and radio, which multiplied his charm by every receiver in the United States, redressed the adverse balance of the press. The "fireside chat" became an institution by which the President could talk direct to every elector without un-

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friendly interruption or distracting comment. A gay political extravaganza depicted him in a supreme emergency turning to his secretary with the instruction, "Bring me another fireside!" For Franklin Roosevelt and science had added a new instrument to the resources of the executive, which he was uniquely qualified to use. A brilliant actor in the clothes—not to mention the pince-nez and the smile—of a more brilliant president announced it nightly to theatre audiences in New York, as the hero of *I'd Rather Be Right* asked, "Did you know I was the Number One Personality on the air? It has nothing to do with my being President, either. It's just something I've got. I don't know what it is, but I've got it." Whatever it might be, he needed it. For charm, skill, political prestige, judicious planning and bold strategy were all necessary if he was to effect the economic reconstruction of the United States.

The normal difficulties of a problem, by whose urgency and vast dimensions any statesman might reasonably have been appalled, were immensely complicated by the nature of the instrument from which the President's authority derived. For the Constitution of the United States was by no means a reformer's charter. Its authors had secured the one reform that greatly interested them by the removal of King George's rule; and after that they ceased to be reformers. For their vessel had reached port, and they felt no interest in further voyages. So it was not surprising that the Founding Fathers left an edifice unfriendly to reform, of which "the whole scheme" (in its wisest commentator's words) "tends to put stability above activity, to sacrifice the productive energies of the bodies it creates to their power of resisting changes in the general fabric of the government." That was, they conceived, the treasure to be preserved at all costs. Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness were safe, they felt, under the form of government they had devised; and it was far more

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important to preserve it than to run unnecessary risks by leaving it unduly exposed to change. The fear of an usurping tyranny in the wicked European fashion informed the cautious mood that wrote the Constitution; and its elements were balanced against one another in a nice equipoise that left each of them without the fatal power to do too much. Indeed, their powers had been so diluted as to bear small resemblance to their European prototypes. The President was not a monarch, neither was Congress a sovereign Parliament; for both of them were called upon to operate under a constitution which they could not touch. Authority had been fragmented with such ingenuity that no one could lay hands on it; and if sovereignty resided anywhere in the United States, it lay beyond the Constitution in the broad masses of the people. For they (and they alone) possessed the power to do anything they liked by constitutional amendment. But its exercise was so impeded by elaborate procedure that it could scarcely be regarded as an engine of immediate reform. So if reforms were called for, they must proceed from President and Congress, whose activities were limited in turn by the strict letter of the Constitution. Nor were they trusted to explore its limits for themselves, since the Constitution had its appointed guardian and interpreter in the Supreme Court. That tribunal was the third member of the uncomfortable trinity of American government. For if the President proposed a law and Congress voted it, the Supreme Court was quite at liberty to hold that it was void as being unconstitutional. From this decision there was no appeal; and the sole remedy, if the passage of the new measure was desired, was to amend the Constitution by procedure of immense elaboration. It followed that the chief justice and his eight colleagues on the bench might be important (and not necessarily helpful) collaborators in any project of reform and that, if the President proposed to create a new heaven and a new earth

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for the United States, he could only do so by the uncertain leave of the Supreme Court.

Housed in a stately mausoleum of strictly classical design, these sages embodied the judicial wisdom of the United States upon this vital topic. Their prestige was immense, though visitors from overseas were occasionally somewhat baffled as their American informants disclosed that happy combination of respect for a particular court with a cheerful disregard of the law which it administered; and that prestige found due expression in the splendour of their new surroundings. They had sat for years in the mellow dignity of the old Senate Chamber, while Congress just across the hall poured out the laws which they were ultimately called on to review. But it was felt to be somehow unsuitable that they should share accommodation in the Capitol with a mere legislature; and they had just been moved across the Plaza into a new building of their own. Its sublimity inspired one disrespectful member of the Court to a wondering enquiry whether they would look like the nine beetles in the Temple of Karnak, whilst another felt as he saw it that the justices should ride to work on elephants. That pediment, those pillars, the imposing flight of steps flanked by its sculptured allegories combined to awe beholders. The dim vistas of a marble vestibule prolonged the emotion, as they drew nearer to the sanctuary; and when the courtroom swam into their startled ken, its grave magnificence was almost more than any audience could bear. Red velvet curtains depended from enormous heights; gigantic bas-reliefs marched solemnly across huge distances; a vast gold clock conveyed the insignificance of time; and space itself was challenged by the pillars soaring to altitudes that human eyes found unconvincing. It was not to be believed that a mere roof could rest upon their capitals. Somewhere above the line of vision they must surely be cut off with all the suddenness of stage scenery, to leave a

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battery of lights and a movie camera commanding a tribunal whose stupendous silhouette did not suggest legal reality so much as Mr Cecil B. de Mille's conception of a law court.

Undeterred by those immensities and mitigating them, where possible, by the obstinate retention of old, trusted chairs and a favourite desk lamp of obsolete design, the justices performed their duties; and at twelve o'clock on Mondays Washington enjoyed the spectacle of the Supreme Court handing down decisions—

*Oh it's time to take your places,
You'll hear the verdict soon;
It's better than the races,
On a Monday afternoon.*

*You'll hear what folks were thinking,
Back in eighteen hundred ten,
And Latin words a-linking
What happens now with then.*

That was just their problem—to accommodate the spreading outline of a modern state, as sketched by the New Deal, within a frame that had been palpably designed five generations earlier to hold a smaller picture. For any person, who felt himself aggrieved by any of the new regulations, could invite the Supreme Court to pass upon the question of its legality; and at their bar it would be measured by the inelastic yardstick of the Constitution. The Supreme Court had no other duty. The Constitution might prove to be the guardian of *laissez faire* in an age that had outgrown the need for *laissez faire*; but that consideration was not for the Court. If there were imperfections in the Constitution, it had provided proper methods for removing them by amendment; and if the due process of constitutional amendment was so protracted that the whole community might suffer untold loss whilst it dragged its length through

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the Constitutional Conventions of forty-eight states, that circumstance was unfortunate, but irremediable. For the Court's duty was to apply the Constitution and not to reason why.

Enterprising litigants, whose interests conflicted with the New Deal, soon provided it with ample opportunity; and the nine sages shortly found themselves appraising the legality of measures which the President and his obliging Congress had judged necessary for the salvation of the United States. This was no innovation, since he was not an autocrat and Congress was not a sovereign body. Legislation in the United States was always something of a makeshift, and American opinion was not greatly shocked by the spectacle of a tribunal passing judgment on the more tentative and detailed aspects of the New Deal. It was largely felt that the emergency had justified the President in performing acts of sovereignty; and it was only to be expected that the constitutional authorities would have their own opinion of such proceedings and that, if opportunities arose, they would not keep it to themselves. A satirist portrayed his legislative methods in the cheerful picture of a president dictating gaily to his attorney general—"Mr Cummings, take a law. 'It is hereby enacted, this day and date, that the United States Government . . .'" promptly interrupted by the sudden emergence of nine justices of the Supreme Court from their hiding place remarking, "No, you don't!"

They were not uniformly disapproving. Some aspects of Mr Roosevelt's legislation passed through the fire unscathed. But General Hugh Johnson of the National Recovery Administration was a Daniel of highly inflammable material; and when he came to judgment one spring day in 1935, the act and all that it implied in the way of industrial control and regulation went up in flames. So did the President; and a White House press conference was there

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to see the fireworks. They witnessed a set piece of unusual coruscation with Mrs Roosevelt sitting alongside knitting a blue sock. It opened with a highly casual exordium, when a newspaper correspondent asked if he cared to comment on the N.R.A. decision and the President replied, "Well, Steve, if you insist. That's an awful thing to put up to a fellow at this hour of the morning just out of bed." But, unperturbed by minor inconveniences, he talked about six consecutive columns of an ordinary newspaper, beginning with a full selection of the angry telegrams that were reaching the White House from indignant citizens and passing to his own emphatic comments on the unanimous opinion which Chief Justice Hughes had read to the Supreme Court four days before. His summary was disrespectful, and he even turned a modern eye upon the section of the Constitution by which the case was governed:

"The country was in the horse-and-buggy age when that clause was written, and if you go back to the debates on the Federal Constitution you will find in 1787 that one of the impelling motives for putting in that clause was this: There wasn't much interstate commerce at all—probably 80 or 90 per cent of the human beings in the thirteen original States were completely self-supporting within their own communities. . . .

"They had in those days no problems relating to employment. They had no problems relating to the earning capacity of people. . . . There were no social questions in those days. The question of health on a national basis had never been discussed. The question of fair business practices had never been discussed. The word was unknown in the vocabulary of the Founding Fathers. The ethics of the period were very different from what they are today. If one man could skin a fellow and get away with it, why, that was all right.

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"In other words, the whole picture was a different one when the interstate commerce clause was put into the Constitution from what it is now. Since that time, because of the improvement in transportation, because of the fact that, as we know, what happens in one State has a good deal of influence on the people in another State, we have developed an entirely different philosophy . . ."

The President could not have been more lucid. He saw the issue plainly—"Is the United States going to decide, are the people of the country going to decide that their Federal Government shall in the future have no right under any implied power or any court-approved power to enter into a solution of a national economic problem, but that that national economic problem must be decided only by the States?" That was what the N.R.A. decision meant—forty-eight different controls of American industry. Next, he supposed, they would have forty-eight distinct controls of alcohol and securities and agriculture replacing Federal authorities. Small wonder that he perorated warmly on the problem of modern government: "We are the only Nation in the world that has not solved that problem. We thought we were solving it, and now it has been thrown right straight in our faces. We have been relegated to the horse-and-buggy definition of interstate commerce." Such were the President's reflections, when the Supreme Court plucked the Blue Eagle of the N.R.A., and a delighted correspondent asked if they might quote him on the subject of the horse and buggy.

The perfect balance of the Constitution, which supplied an irresistible force, had not omitted to provide an irremovable post; and the resulting situation was embarrassing for both. But it was not altogether plain which of them would be the more embarrassed in the end. That summer a progressive member of the Court indicated that its decisions were coming to be based upon the "personal

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economic predilections" of nine ageing justices; and it almost looked as if their veto would erect a barrier across the pathway of reform. What would the President do next? The N.R.A. decision had fragmented his national system of industrial control; and presently his agricultural reforms would come before the Court, which had already given ample evidence that it was hard to please. The towering edifice of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration was no less nationwide in its extent than the restrictive codes of the N.R.A.; and when a suitor asked to be relieved from its exactions on the familiar grounds, the old dilemma faced the justices in their new marble shrine.

The case was duly argued, and one Monday afternoon in January, 1936, the Court's opinion showed that AAA was the last bubble rising to the surface of Mr Roosevelt's alphabet soup. For, by six votes to three, they pricked it, thus reducing agricultural control by Federal authority to anarchy—or to such order as forty-eight distinct and independent states were capable of introducing. This devastating opinion was read by Mr Justice Roberts, one of the few members of the Court whom its new immensities had not rendered totally inaudible. He perorated bravely on the horrid spectacle of "the United States converted into a central government exercising controlled police power in every state of the Union," while the liberal minority protested in an ominous dissent that "Courts are not the only agency of government that must be assumed to have capacities to govern." The issue was before the country once again. The first thing to find out was what the President was going to do next.

It was on a Monday that the Court rendered its decision, and on Friday morning an anteroom in the White House was hazy with cigarette smoke. The round table at its centre was piled with the doubtful headgear of the press, as the White House correspondents waited for the Pres-

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dent's press conference. This was a Roosevelt institution. Woodrow Wilson had started something of the kind, but the war intervened with its attendant secrecy. Harding reverted to the practice, but one or two uncomfortable episodes recalled him to the more cautious usage of written questions. Mr Hoover, though he did his best, appeared on such occasions to shuffle with all the awkwardness of an unresponsive candidate at question time; and the cheerful readiness of Franklin Roosevelt contrasted favourably with his unhandy ways and the fabulous reticence of Mr Coolidge. He met them twice a week for unrestricted questioning, a lively contrast with the secluded majesty of European ministers, to whom a correspondent was something to be viewed fastidiously at safe distances or handled by subordinates with departmental tongs. But that was not Mr Roosevelt's way. He met them en masse in his office; and he seemed to like it, a dialectical athlete enjoying a short bout of sparring with an appreciative audience. They came to know his way—the mask of cheerful levity, the cigarette in its long holder, the swiftly filling ash tray among the Democratic donkeys on the broad desk in front of him, the backward turn to check a fact with a secretary watchful in the seat behind his shoulder, the bland parries, the deft turns of ridicule, the amiable negations, the upturned smile to mark a score that drew approving grins from the half circle of his staff behind him like proud seconds in a boxer's corner, and a sudden seriousness transforming the whole mask when it became possible to say something that was worth saying.

That was his practice; and on that winter morning in January, 1936, they were all waiting to go in. Presently a door would open; somebody would clap his hands; and they would scramble through a narrow entry beneath the watching eyes of Secret Service men. He would be sitting at the desk in front of them with the tall windows on the

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White House garden and the semicircle of his staff behind; and they would see the open jacket, the silk shirtwaist and soft collar, all surmounted by a pair of good eyes and the cigarette in a long holder. Then the door would close behind them; somebody would shout "All in," just like a Pullman porter calling "All aboard"; and the two hundred and sixty-fifth White House press conference would open. What would the President do next?

III

Westminster, II

...CONGRATULATIONS to our new King as he takes his place in the long line following his distinguished ancestors. No two sovereigns in that long gallery had the same countenance nor served their people in identical fashion. The three Sovereigns to whom I have particularly referred today were widely divergent in their gifts which they placed upon the common altar of national service. King Edward VIII in his turn brings to that same altar a personality richly endowed with experience of public affairs, with the fruits of travel, with universal goodwill. He has the secret of youth in the prime of age. He has a wider and more intimate knowledge of all classes of his subjects, not only at home but throughout the Dominions and India, than any of his predecessors. We cannot foresee . . ."

The prime minister was speaking in the voice to which Conservative ascendancy in England owed so much in the past few years. For voices, in the age of radio, had come to matter more than programmes or personalities—the hoarse, harsh scream of Adolf Hitler, Franklin Roosevelt's unshakable assurance and Mr Baldwin's sedative. He had been broadcasting two nights before about the nation's loss, about the old king's dying murmur to his faithful

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secretary and the divine beneficence by which it had been mercifully ordered that he should be taken before his queen. "I cannot help feeling that with a King," said Mr Baldwin, "knowing how lonely the high places of the world are, and knowing that he has no one but his wife with whom he might have really intimate converse—I tremble to think what it might have been for him had he been alone in his awful task with no voice by him to cheer, to comfort, and to encourage." That, though he scarcely seemed to notice it, was precisely the young king's position; and Mr Baldwin had a ready fund of sympathy for the solitude of public eminence. Indeed, he voiced it with some frequency—in his valediction to Lord Oxford on "the essential and ultimate loneliness of that position" and in those nostalgic utterances in which he wistfully confessed himself an exile from Worcestershire in "the loneliest job in the world."

A countryman whose life was passed in urban occupations, an industrialist who seemed to view the march of industry with unconcealed regret, Mr Baldwin was full of interesting contradictions and divergent loyalties. For he admired the English with a slightly hectic admiration which reminds us that his mother was a Miss MacDonald; and his evident distaste for mechanical developments conflicted strangely with the circumstance that his father was a successful ironmaster and chairman of the Great Western Railway. (True, some earlier forebears of his had been on the land; but that was not surprising, since before the invention of machinery there was no machinery for them to use.) This heritage floated him comfortably into politics; and during the war a sincere attachment to the tenets of Protection brought him into minor office in the wake of Mr Bonar Law. Promotion followed; and in the later stages of the Coalition he had served Mr Lloyd George in Cabinet as president of the Board of Trade. But that service irked

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him, as it began to dawn upon postwar Conservatism that, though useful, Mr Lloyd George was not Conservative at heart. This was a sad disillusion; and in the ensuing scuffle Mr Baldwin's hand was raised against his leader in obedience to his still older leader, Mr Bonar Law. His intervention was impressive, and the dissolution of that uncomfortable partnership in 1922 owed a good deal to Mr Baldwin's militant simplicity. Successful insurrection earned him a degree of party eminence which was a little in advance of that to which he was entitled by seniority or past performance. He became chancellor of the exchequer and in that capacity negotiated an agreement on the subject of Great Britain's war debt to the United States which, though less militant, was no less a demonstration of his simplicity. But when Mr Bonar Law succumbed, it was so evident that Mr Baldwin was the second member of his party in the House of Commons that King George V invited him to become prime minister.

His qualities had up to now been inconspicuous. For British politics, after the strenuous experiment of the Coalition, were largely negative in character. The last election had been an open competition in the somewhat negative accomplishment of not being Mr Lloyd George; and in the outcome Mr Bonar Law was found to be more indisputably not Mr Lloyd George than any of the other entrants. When he retired, that negative inheritance fell to his successor; for it was no less evident that Mr Baldwin was not Mr Lloyd George either. This role sufficed, until his ardour for Protection led him to miscalculate his countrymen's affection for high tariffs. The lost election of 1923 installed a Labour government in office. But the experiment was brief and unsatisfying, and it left politics more negative than ever. Here was Mr Baldwin's opportunity. For if it had been plain before that he was not Mr Lloyd George, it was still more apparent that he was

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not Mr Ramsay MacDonald. That was all that England asked; and nothing could have been more satisfying than his performance of the part. The country's need was all for something unobtrusive; and at this stage his unobtrusiveness was quite the most obtrusive thing about him. The world was growing difficult, and the same phenomenon was visible elsewhere. For in those very years the United States reposed upon the breast of Mr Coolidge in the comforting belief that, if he was nothing else, he was predictable. He might not say very much. But that must be because he thought the more; and if he did extremely little, that seemed infinitely preferable to doing far too much. The mood was almost universal in the English-speaking world; and whilst America enjoyed the Yankee shrewdness of a tight-lipped president admired as "Cautious Cal," England was simultaneously gratified by "Safety First" embodied in the ripe sagacity of Mr Baldwin.

Under these favourable circumstances his personality unfolded, and in the process it was found to be more complex than might have been supposed at first. But that was, after all, an English quality at which Mr Rudyard Kipling had already pointed an admiring finger.

*The Celt in all his variants from Builth to Bally-hoo,
His mental processes are plain—one knows what he will do,
And can logically predicate his finish by his start;
But the English—ah, the English!—they are quite a race apart.*

And when it was remembered that the poet was Mr Baldwin's cousin, his diagnosis grew more interesting—

*Their psychology is bovine, their outlook crude and raw.
They abandon vital matters to be tickled with a straw,
But the straw that they were tickled with—the chaff that they
were fed with—*

*They convert into a weaver's beam to break their foeman's
head with.*

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*For undemocratic reasons and for motives not of State,
They arrive at their conclusions—largely inarticulate.
Being void of self-expression they confide their views to none;
But sometimes in a smoking-room, one learns why things were
done.*

*In telegraphic sentences, half swallowed at the ends,
They hint a matter's inwardness—and there the matter ends.
And while the Celt is talking from Valencia to Kirkwall,
The English—ah, the English!—don't say anything at all.*

There were moments when it was not altogether plain which of these two gifted cousins stood as a model to the other. For if some of Mr Baldwin's qualities appear to be portrayed in Mr Kipling's Englishman, his admiration of the English countryside owed something to his cousin's Anglo-Indian nostalgia; and the prime minister occasionally gave way to the poet's race consciousness, which might be overheard in sentences of Mr Baldwin's that began: "You know the family failing . . ." and even "We of the blood . . ." There was the same tendency in both to appropriate the Roman virtues and to admire the English for their less admirable qualities—their distaste for foreign kickshaws, their proneness to mistake apathy for calm and their suspicion of articulate speech. For this formidable orator could under-rate his own accomplishment by quoting with approval Froude's hostile judgment that "oratory is the harlot of the arts"; and when he informed the Cambridge Union that "to tell the truth needs no art at all, and that is why I always believe in it," an artist was indulging in that affectation of artlessness which is essential if Englishmen are to be persuaded.

That was his foremost accomplishment—persuading Englishmen of things of which they wished to be persuaded. For it was his sincere conviction that they knew what was good for them. Mr Baldwin was convinced that if he

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could only penetrate their unexpressed beliefs, he would know what was best for England. His divination was sometimes at fault, as when he put his country at the fiscal fence in 1923 and it refused to take the jump. But after the fiasco of a Labour government the nation's mood accorded with his own. They would grow old together, leaving dangerous experiment to foreigners and cultivating their ancestral virtues. True, their ancestors had won their liberties in a less passive mood; and Mr Baldwin had a genuine respect for their liberties. But that was a long time ago. Those restless figures were at peace in country churchyards, and the ploughboy whistled on their battlefields. At the moment it seemed wiser to leave things as they were. That was manifestly what the nation wanted; and Mr Baldwin was just the man to do it. When excited voices clamoured for ill-considered forms of action, his immobility assumed a deeper stillness. He was the wise headmaster of his cousin's dream, deep in a "brown-bound tobacco-scented library"; and his calm outshone the steady light that had once earned the poet's praise—

*If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you . . .*

It was just conceivable, of course, that a younger generation might find less satisfaction in these immobile qualities. But their appeal was irresistible for those of his contemporaries who wished to leave things as they were. He was capable upon occasion of a sympathetic gesture in the direction of a better world. But a practical conviction that this world was good enough for him controlled his actions. For there was little danger of uncharted flights towards Utopia with Mr Baldwin; and when impulsive persons challenged the existing order, his common sense

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rebelled and he stood out, a sentimental Walpole, in defence of the status quo.

His equipment for the task was admirable—a gift of plain expression, a modest doubt as to his intellectual ability, implicit faith in his own moral purpose and a rare capacity for letting things alone. No outfit could have been more brilliantly designed for winning popularity in a stationary age. Perhaps his virtues were less Roman than he had supposed, since educated Englishmen are often apt to credit their dim recollections of the classics to their own contemporaries and to seek the senatorial virtues of *pietas* and *gravitas* on the green benches of the House of Commons. Had not Mr Baldwin spoken of “that reticence and reserve that belong essentially to the Roman and the Englishman rather than to the Greek and the Celt”? This was broad-minded of him, since his mother was a MacDonald. But it was probably of more significance that both his parents had been Wesleyan Methodists. His admiration of his countrymen was occasionally a shade absurd, when he praised them for “that power of making homes, almost peculiar to our people”—as if the lesser breeds habitually lived under canvas or in promiscuity. But how could they withhold their admiration from one by whom they were so wholeheartedly admired? His admiration was, perhaps, romantic and a trifle literary. But that was hardly to be wondered at, since three of his aunts had married with distinction into late Victorian culture, giving Mr Baldwin remarkable affiliations with the arts. For one sister, as Lady Burne-Jones, breathed the thin air of a pale fantasy that caught the last receding gleam of the Pre-Raphaelites, whilst another watched Sir Edward Poynter ascend with dignity to the presidency of the Royal Academy and a third, married to Mr Lockwood Kipling, enjoyed her husband’s craftsmanship and watched their son develop the most unusual literary talent of his generation. With such

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uncles, aunts and cousins Mr Baldwin's background was less simple-minded than might have been supposed, and the varied muses of the Grosvenor Gallery and *Soldiers Three* were never far away. (Did he not confess to nightly readings in the classics after evenings passed in canvassing for Tory votes on licensed premises?) Most men aspire to be of the type that was most admired in the world around their twentieth birthday; and if Mr Baldwin was no exception to that rule, his ideal must have been located in the age of Queen Victoria's first jubilee—a time of happy certainties, when Tennyson could celebrate their

Fifty years of ever-broadening Commerce!
Fifty years of ever-brightening Science!
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

There were no doubts about the march of commerce then, or the beneficence of science, or the destiny of Queen Victoria's empire to overshadow half the earth. In later years Mr Baldwin sometimes liked to term himself a Victorian. If he was right, the vintage was that of 1887. It was a stationary age (and his equipment was admirably calculated to charm a stationary age) of which the epitaph was written in *The Forsyte Saga*, whose author termed it wistfully "a gilt-edged period," a comfortable generation whose appetite for change was strictly limited by fears that Mr Gladstone was going to do something dreadful or that foreigners might prove unwilling to be put in their place.

This sunny time, when agricultural labourers wore smocks and bearded artisans exasperated young trade unions by their ingrained loyalty to their employers, was years away from the more sombre epoch in which Mr Baldwin was called upon to act. For he was middle-aged when the war transformed the world that he had known; and by the time that he reached any eminence, he was already elderly. This was not without its uses

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so long as what the country seemed to need was a sage counsellor whose head could be considerably shaken when wild courses were proposed. For Mr Baldwin was a master of the wistful negative. English Conservatism had always been a rather negative affair, consisting of successive denials that the Corn Laws stood in any need of repeal, the franchise of enlargement, the Irish of anything for which they had been understood to ask, and that Mr Gladstone was justified by any chance in saying anything which he had been understood to say. Indeed, its leaders' duties were principally those of antithesis. When Mr Gladstone was clean shaven, hated Turks and favoured Irishmen, Lord Salisbury disliked the Irish, feared the Czar and wore a beard; and as the inheritance descended, it fell to Mr Baldwin to be nothing that Mr Lloyd George or Mr Ramsay MacDonald might profess to be. The role suited him, since it involved no artifice. His genius for letting things alone became a policy; and for some time this passive mood suited the nation too. But situations might arise which it was inadvisable to let alone. True, there was a feeling of security in following his sadly shaken head along safe paths lit by the sober candle of experience and levelled by tradition. But headshaking is sometimes an insufficient form of government, and it is often dangerous to play too much for safety. That was Mr Baldwin's weakness, since his inherent tendency to play for safety in the second innings occasionally threw away the match. It was inevitable though. His temperament and his advancing years inclined him equally in that direction. Perhaps it was the defect of those qualities which had endeared him to a rather weary generation in the years immediately following the war, when his unlikely star first climbed above the rim of politics. But as time prolonged his term of office, it became more doubtful how far they would appeal to Mr Baldwin's juniors. For the years were slipping by,

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and most Englishmen were now a good deal younger than himself. Imperceptibly the men that fought in France were nearing middle age, and they were mounting to the saddle now. But Mr Baldwin was manifestly of an older generation. He had been over military age when the war started, and he was a married man when his new sovereign was born.

These gifts were freely offered to the nation's service in the slightly jaded years that followed its experiment in Labour rule; and Mr Baldwin's sedative accomplishments were at a premium. He seemed to have a flair for knowing what the nation wanted, when it did not want very much; and frequent exposition of the national character inclined him to the view that it was very like his own. But he was shrewdly aware that politics are not so simple as they seem; and there were interesting contradictions in the recipe for public life which he once confided to wireless listeners—"Use your common sense, avoid logic, love your fellow-men, have a profound faith in your own people, grow the hide of a rhinoceros." For if the last was requisite, it would appear that some of Mr Baldwin's fellow men were not so lovable as might have been supposed. Indeed, his view of politics was sometimes apt to be unflattering, since he announced that "a Prime Minister sees human nature bared to the bone" and that "there is no veil between him and the human heart (or no veil through which he cannot see) and in his less happy moments he may feel himself to be the repository of the sins and follies of the whole world." This melancholy view of Mr Baldwin's fellow creatures tempered his natural benevolence with caution and made this lover of his fellow men a wary politician. That quality inclined him to avoid abrupt decisions and unduly forceful colleagues; and so long as the country was content with government by gravitation, Mr Baldwin was secure in its regard. But when the

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changing situation created a demand for a more active direction of affairs, his public reputation suffered a decline. His immobility, which had compelled their admiration in face of the General Strike, seemed less admirable in face of Unemployment. That happy tendency to hope that Europe would disarm following the British lead was somehow out of date in face of Adolf Hitler's Germany, to say nothing of Mussolini's Italy and those remoter territories by which his rolling gaze had been attracted; and it began to seem inadequate in framing British policy to place quite so much reliance upon what Froude had unkindly termed, "the coward's consolation, 'It will last my time.' " For it was growing evident that there were things which did not improve by being merely let alone; and restless minds began to turn away from Mr Baldwin's faith in time's healing power. Indeed, this mood of gathering impatience grew on the nation until those gifts, which had once seemed so restful, began to strike large numbers of his countrymen as being merely ineffective.

Even his cautious preference for safe colleagues began to be regretted now. The diffidence of a newcomer had helped to keep him silent in the Coalition Cabinet, where he sucked his pipe and listened to Mr Lloyd George and watched the caracoling dialectics of Lord Birkenhead and Mr Winston Churchill controlled by the deft touches of their incomparable ringmaster. But these accomplishments were not for Mr Baldwin; and the Conservative secession of 1922 relieved him for the time from the embarrassing society of those whom one of their own number rather arrogantly termed the "first-class brains." For Mr Bonar Law supplied more restful colleagues; and when Mr Baldwin succeeded to his place, the company was not embarrassing. In course of time the Tory truants returned to their allegiance. But they returned to a changed atmosphere, in which ability was kept in due subordination to the rarer

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gifts of character and Sir William Joynson-Hicks could be a secretary of state.

This process was renewed when the swift emergency of 1931 dictated the formation of a National government. For the crisis drew together Liberals, Conservatives and Labour in a common effort to preserve the status quo; and in the process it was not surprising that the more exciting elements of each were left outside. Once more the cry was "Safety First"; once more a popular demand recalled the passive virtues of King Log; and on the wave Conservatism rode victoriously back to Westminster. For in such a combination it was only to be expected that Conservatism would predominate. But with rare abnegation Mr Baldwin left the highest place to his Labour predecessor who, suddenly convinced of his own error, denounced his former self with the full ardour of a convert. So Mr Ramsay MacDonald, still prime minister, saved England from himself, while Mr Baldwin wheeled the Tory legions into line behind him. Their serried ranks under his sedate command gave that assurance of stability which was demanded by a startled nation; and once again his stationary qualities accorded with the public mood. But such moods, alas! are evanescent; and as the public mind recovered from its fright, it derived less satisfaction from uneventful policies applied by unexciting ministers. For the world grew more eventful round them. Stationary qualities were all very well in 1931. But after 1933 their appeal was more limited. Restful gifts were at a discount now; and it was not so certain that a Cabinet in Mr Baldwin's image still responded to the country's need. Yet his unobtrusive figure was predominant; his unadventurous temper guided its decisions; and after the Jubilee of 1935 he succeeded to the highest place once more. There were few thrills at the changing of the guard, as Mr Ramsay MacDonald came wearily off duty and Mr Baldwin inconspicuously

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took his post. The passing years had not made him more impetuous; and the colleagues of his choice were in no way calculated to embarrass him. But in the shifting world of 1936 it might be felt that something more alert could serve the nation quite as well, if not a trifle better; and it almost seemed to unsympathetic critics, as they surveyed his colleagues, that King Claudius had asked Polonius to form a ministry and that it consisted largely of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

This unfavourable sentiment had not prevented him from winning an election in the last months of the old reign. But his victory owed much to the surviving atmosphere of King George's jubilee, which hung on the autumn air of 1935 with a vague sense of gratitude to old, familiar faces, and more (like Mr Roosevelt's) to the political ineptitude of his opponents. It had been followed by a grave episode in public life, which cost him his foreign secretary and a large measure of popular esteem. The government, indeed, survived the resignation of Sir Samuel Hoare. But, so far as Mr Baldwin was concerned, the decline persisted; and a demise of the Crown, which followed within five weeks, was helpful to his own prestige by permitting him to appear officially in his favourite character as the voice of England. The prime minister was always at his best on such occasions; and the House of Commons heard him with enjoyment, as he assured King Edward of their loyal service.

IV

Rome

THE WORLD which the prime minister surveyed that winter from the treasury bench was an uncomfortable place. Its discomfort arose from causes with which Mr Baldwin in his long official life had grown familiar. For the treaty system, under which the world had lived for half a generation past, was showing signs of wear, a painful thought for those of its contemporaries who still felt as young as ever. Some European nations held that their growth had been unfairly checked by these instruments, some that their martial services had received inadequate rewards. A member of the government that made the Treaty of Versailles, Mr Baldwin had grown up with the peace treaties. With two brief interruptions of less than three years, he had been continuously in office since the third year of the war. As a member of Mr Lloyd George's Cabinet he had watched the Reparation Commission struggling with German inability to pay the losses which had been inflicted on the world by German policy; as Mr Bonar Law's lieutenant he saw the French occupy the Ruhr; and as prime minister he had presided over the successive stages in the long hunt for stability which culminated in the triumphant signature of the Locarno treaties. Finality, it seemed, was reached at last in 1925,

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when these precious documents were gleefully initialled and all the buildings on the lake leaped out in simultaneous illumination and Mrs Chamberlain was kissed by M. Briand at a Paris railway station and Mr Austen Chamberlain came home to wear his Garter. But that was not the end. For mankind, obstinately reluctant to stand still, grew faster than the treaty system; and when Mr Baldwin returned to power in 1931, the world's malaise was still apparent.

It was an age of crude opinions, when whole communities, deprived of their religion by the march of scepticism and the apparent indifference of the Deity to their material condition, had transferred a religious faith to those political ideas by which they hoped their economic state might be improved. More than one church had foundered in the wartime and postwar revolutions. But they were replaced by fresh communions, in which the faithful chanted their belief in economic formulæ or patriotic prophets. The Russian, orthodox no longer, intoned the hallowed words of Marx, whilst Italy found consolation in the Fascist creed, and the uncertain soul of Germany hung poised (as it had hung three hundred years before) between the two ways of salvation. The fervour of the rival churchmen gave a sharper edge to disagreement than any worn by the old party differences, which men had been content to settle with the ballot box or to adjust by the compromises of normal politics. But such half measures were scarcely applicable to fundamental disagreements in politically backward nations. For it seemed almost frivolous to these enthusiasts to leave vital questions at the mercy of electoral arithmetic; and how could compromises be admitted, where the whole salvation of the people manifestly hung upon its choice? In this unbending mood they turned increasingly to the unanswerable argument of force. Controversy was replaced by street fighting; and when its object

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was achieved by the installation of themselves in power, the sincerity of their opinions was the measure of the brutality with which they were enforced. For toleration seems to concede that a rival creed may possibly be right or that, if others hold it, the community will not be damaged past repair. But the devotee, whose enthusiasm can respect no other doctrine than his own and holds that any heresy endangers the whole fabric of society, is logically driven by his own belief to enforce total unanimity by persecution. Other creeds had walked that way before; and it was not surprising that these zealots of political belief revived the Holy Office. Rack and stake were replaced by rubber truncheon and barbed wire, as the apparatus of bigotry was brought up to date. For unanimity, it seemed, must be secured at all costs. Armed violence was substituted for political debate; unwilling converts were offered a new economic Koran or the sword; and when the process was complete, all disagreement was outlawed and unbroken orthodoxy prevailed in the forced and silent unanimity of totalitarian communities.

This unpleasant process was completed first in Russia, where a revolution had long been overdue and its more drastic features were excused (or, at least, explained) by the consistent brutality of the old order and the lamentably backward state in which the masses had been left. Working in a medium which was devoid of education and accustomed to a rigid social discipline, the revolutionaries improvised a structure in which Socialism was adapted to the needs of Russia. For it was an absolutism of the Left. The Kremlin was reoccupied by a Red czar; the consolations of religion were replaced by Communist beliefs, to which conformity was universally enforced. The new religion had, like the old, its sacred pictures, in which the bearded features of Karl Marx were reproduced with monotonous fidelity; and its eager missionaries spread the

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word in the darkness of capitalist countries. But the leading feature of the new order was the compulsory obedience of all society to a single party. No other creed was tolerated; and party leaders in other countries, faced with intractable electorates, gazed a little enviously at the Soviet. For it would obviously simplify so much, if people could be prohibited from voting for the other side. Must they vote at all? Or if they had to, why should there be another side? That simple revelation dawned on Europe from the east; and as the Russians subsided into unanimity, it occurred to hopeful bigots on all sides of politics that, if their adversaries were really in grave error which amounted to a state of mortal sin, their heresies could be proscribed, their parties legally dissolved and their followers forcibly baptised for inclusion in a single fold. There would be no more Opposition. A victory achieved by force could be consecrated by enactment; and a regenerated nation would then be free to follow the one way of salvation, because all others had been forcibly obliterated. That was the totalitarian discovery, by which the politics of backward races, inexperienced in the more exacting process of self-government, were simplified for undeveloped minds.

After a short interval these revolutionary methods were appropriated for the service of the counterrevolution by an enthusiastic body of Italians. (Had not the evils of the Reformation been arrested by an active Counter Reformation?) Confronted by a social order which they found uncongenial, the Fascists adopted the latest methods of the Left in order to effect a revolution of the Right. Violence replaced discussion; and as small arms had become the normal instrument of controversy, the new party adopted uniform and military formations. The experiment, conducted by the somewhat operatic personality of Benito Mussolini, was thoroughly successful; and (as in Russia)

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a single party succeeded in imposing national unanimity on Italy. But where the Russian Revolution had relied for its religious impetus upon the social fervour of Communist beliefs, Fascism was forced to look elsewhere for a motive power; and as the Bolsheviks and their Italian disciples employed the driving force of poverty as their propellant, the Fascists found it in a lively exaggeration of patriotic feeling.

Italian patriotism in 1922 was in a highly sensitive condition. The war, which was barely four years distant, had strained the nation without adding noticeably to its laurels. True, they were on the winning side. But there was an uneasy feeling that this was not wholly due to their unaided efforts; and the name of Caporetto, with its melancholy tale of three thousand lost guns and six hundred thousand dead, wounded, prisoners and missing, was added to their depressing annals of military failure, in which Novara and Custoza already attested Italian inability to withstand European enemies and the abiding shame of Adowa was still a sad reminder of defeat by Africans. Italy had emerged from the World War with its appetite for military glory largely unsatisfied. But in the more propitious atmosphere of peace it grew more warlike every day. This emotional release found its first outlet in the spectacular proceedings of D'Annunzio, whose poetic fancy playing on the restricted stage of Fiume furnished a rich variety of uniforms, the vertical salute and simultaneous ejaculations of "*A noi!*" and "*Eya! Alalà!*" But the superior intelligence of Mussolini appropriated these embellishments to larger purposes, applying them to the counterrevolutionary structure of Fascism. Enhanced by such attractions and designed to form an antidote to the prevailing Russian virus, that creed was now propounded as a rival of the Left, relying for its fervour on a piercing note of patriotism; and when the Fascist coup succeeded, Italy was regimented by a single

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party wearing military uniform and founded, in the last analysis, upon the exercise of force.

A second church had been erected whose creed was no less rigid than the Marxian Koran—a strange amalgam of its founder's distaste for Communism and for Parliamentary methods, of his early reading of the French Syndicalists and of his intense patriotic feeling. Like other churches, it developed a strong tendency to deify its founder. But where Marx was safely dead (and consequently satisfied with a sufficiency of doctrinal incense), Mussolini was very much alive. The new religion of Fascism was highly anthropomorphic in the objects of its worship. Indeed, it had not more than one; and the sole way to worship its presiding deity was to endow him with a high degree of personal omnipotence. This necessitated a return to forms of government which more developed nations had discarded long before. For in the Western world autocracy was normally regarded as something wholly obsolete, of which the last surviving European specimen had perished with the czar. But since the history of Italian freedom was comparatively short, the language of authority was still familiar in Italian ears. The way was clear; and under Mussolini Italy reverted to a degree of autocracy by which the more progressive Cæsars would have been considerably startled.

New ingredients had now been introduced into the sectarian rule initiated by the Communists. For the more picturesque Italian experiment contributed, as variations on the Russian theme, a strongly patriotic impetus, party organisation in military forms and costume, and an almost mystic worship of the party leader. These adornments, which captivated Italy, could hardly fail to attract the German mind; and it was not surprising that when the counterrevolution reached Germany, its form owed much to the Italian model. Nothing could have been

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more congenial. For that intelligence was always powerfully affected by the charms of uniform; and its emotions could be roused to unexpected heights by the comparatively novel stimulant of national feeling. Frenchmen had been aware of being French for centuries. But the discovery that they were Germans was of relatively recent date for Prussians, Saxons and Bavarians, and it still retained the charms of novelty. Their grandfathers, it seemed, had stumbled on the fact in the first half of the nineteenth century; and United Germany had been achieved by their own fathers less than sixty years before. It followed that their patriotic sentiment was still in a youthful phase of self-assertion, and Germans were inclined to be vociferous about things that other nations took for granted. Galled by defeat, this feeling was a powerful intoxicant; and when, following the Italian precedent, it was adopted as the chief propellant of the counterrevolution, its driving power was immense. For the National Socialists, who were prepared to rescue Germany from Communism by installing the dictatorship of their own sect instead, were closely modelled on the Fascists. A brown shirt was substituted for their more becoming black; the simple patriotic appetites of Italy were replaced by a heady blend of tribal loyalty, Wagnerian mythology and unreasoning antipathy towards Jews and Communists; and adherents of the new religion were provided with a holy man to worship in Adolf Hitler.

Here was a Teutonic version of the Russian form of party tyranny with its Italian trimmings which made an irresistible appeal to German minds. A nation whose instinct for politics had never been conspicuous was now relieved of further trouble by the abolition of debate and its replacement by a patriotic orthodoxy which could be assimilated without too much effort. Uniforms abounded, as if the evil dream of forcible disarmament by the victorious Allies had never happened; and the nation's wounded self-

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esteem found consolation in the vociferous denunciation of those peace treaties in which a national collapse had been recorded. With such attractions (and a brilliant apparatus for the stimulation of organised hysteria) it was not surprising that a Nazi monarchy was soon able to replace the less picturesque republic by which Germany had ruled itself since 1918; and when the change was made in 1933, Europe was confronted with a third political religion.

These transformations, which had successively replaced the governments of Russia, Italy and Germany by the infallible pontiffs of three faiths, effected a depressing change in international relations. For these pontifical authorities were far less flexible than any of their predecessors. Wholly intolerant, they rarely favoured infidels with anything but excommunication; and it was disconcerting that, whilst one creed reposed upon a fixed belief in the unsoundness of the whole existing social order, another rested confidently on a complete denial of the treaty system by which all international relations were regulated. Their policies, originating in a species of divine revelation, were apt to be immutable; and the holy men, to whom these missions had been entrusted, advanced in an undeviating line with a somnambulist's indifference to obstacles or to other persons who might happen to be in the way. This was embarrassing for statesmen trained in a more accommodating school; and the world of Mr Baldwin's later years became increasingly uncomfortable. For it was full of forces moving uncontrollably to goals that were not readily attainable, since every second Continental nation seemed to steer by the unwinking light of "manifest destiny." One doctrine of predestination in the world was quite bad enough, but when several conflicted, the prospects were confused. A further circumstance impaired the world's amenities since discussion, with which part of Europe had dispensed on domestic subjects, was presently

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replaced in the wider field of international affairs by bare assertion. Messianic figures, assisted by the latest aids of scientific stagecraft, expounded their indisputable revelations. But it was far from easy to adjust them to reality by the normal process of negotiation, since it was plainly impracticable to discuss these oracles without a hint of contradiction, and contradiction of the Word was manifestly sacrilege. In this dilemma Europe was reduced to a depressing era of sonorous monologue. The air vibrated with the blare of totalitarian loud-speakers, as the rival holy men performed their incantations in the awestruck hearing of their respective worshippers; and on the mounting uproar less strident voices were apt to be unheard. Indeed, their owners, unsupported by the thunders of mechanical applause and the punctual approval of a drilled and regimented press, almost felt themselves to be the scared survivors of a milder age confronted by the dangers of a harsher epoch, amiable pterodactyls adrift among the sabre-toothed and armoured monsters of the succeeding era.

It was all most embarrassing. Domestic animals in a menagerie, they stared apprehensively about them. For the world of 1936, which Mr Baldwin surveyed that winter, was an uncomfortable place. Its main discomfort at the moment came from Italy, where a mood of exaltation had been succeeded by a less manageable mood of expansion. Pre-Fascist Italy had made considerable gains of European territory, under the peace treaties. Five thousand square miles of South Tyrol, the port of Trieste and the northern angle of the Adriatic represented a respectable addition to the kingdom of Savoy, which would bear comparison with the more distant (and not infrequently less lucrative) colonial acquisitions of other Allies. But these advances, with the possible exception of Fiume, were hardly to the credit of the Fascist regime; and as the years went by, its

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conquering airs demanded something in the nature of a conquest. For the exuberant autocracy of Mussolini had caused his countrymen to live processionally in a perpetual triumph. But if his rendering of a Roman triumph was to be convincing, there would have to be some captives. Where were they to come from? It was scarcely practicable to make further gains in Europe, since the moral claim of Italy to some of those already made was slightly dubious. Besides, the price of European territory was apt to be a European war; and that was rather more than Mussolini was prepared to pay. This left the easier alternative of colonial expansion; and for some years Italian energies were concentrated upon the dreary wastes of Tripoli, a prewar acquisition which was impressively redecorated with a Roman name. But even after an intensive effort of repression, exploration and road making, its possibilities remained severely limited by the depressing fact that it was still, and seemed likely to remain, a desert. Nor was it a practicable starting point for further acquisitions, since it was inconveniently flanked upon the east and west by Egypt and Tunis (where the British and the French were already installed) and, in consequence, could only grow towards the south, where there was nothing else in sight but the Sahara, which incidentally belonged to France. It was quite evident that Mussolini's march of empire could hardly start from Libya or that, if it did, it would end prematurely in a *cul-de-sac*.

But that was not the only territory owned by Italy in Africa; and the alternative was far more prepossessing. For the unimpressive colonies of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland (recently enlarged by an act of British benevolence) adjoined the independent hinterland of Abyssinia. Indeed, its independence had been preserved in 1896 from Baratieri's expedition at Adowa in a manner that had left enduring scars upon Italian self-esteem. But science

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had advanced; a European force would have advantages unknown to savage warfare in 1896, and in these favourable circumstances Mussolini was unlikely to accept as final the defeats of his Parliamentary predecessors. Attention was accordingly transferred to East Africa. In 1932 a Fascist general appeared in Eritrea with instructions to report upon the possibilities. These possibilities, upon which he reported hopefully, included a war with Abyssinia; and late in 1933 he had a most instructive conversation with his duce. The hopeful general had asked for the honour of commanding the Italian forces in case of war.

"Surely," said Mussolini.

"You don't think me too old?" the modest general enquired.

"No," said his master without undue tenderness, "because we mustn't lose time." Growing more definite, the duce added the exciting information that the affair would have to be disposed of by 1936.

"Very good," said General De Bono.

The situation was a little strange, since it was only 1933, and at the moment the state with which Italy was contemplating war, in the privacy of Signor Mussolini's consultations, was a happy signatory of an Italo-Abyssinian Treaty of Friendship and Arbitration, which was just five years old, and a fellow member of the League of Nations, whose recent candidature for that distinction had enjoyed Italian support in face of some British scepticism. But such technical considerations were not permitted to interfere with military preparations, which went briskly forward through the ensuing months. Roads, aerodromes and barracks were laboriously built; the awkward problem of water supply received attention; and judicious steps were taken to accelerate the process of disintegration to which the feudal state of Abyssinia was naturally subject. Troops were beginning to arrive from home; there was a heartening

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increase in the supply of aeroplanes to counterbalance the thirteen machines which were believed to constitute the menacing air power of Abyssinia; and as October, 1935, approached, the military situation was highly promising. For one side commanded a complete preponderance of modern weapons and equipment. All the elements, indeed, of a successful war were there except a *casus belli*. But that trivial defect could be remedied, since one could no doubt be discovered somewhere when the time arrived. Meanwhile De Bono had reported early in the year with some discouragement that the Abyssinians (against whom he was understood to be preparing to defend the Italian colonies) were not going to begin the war. Quite undeterred, the duce wrote that "in case the Negus should have no intention of attacking us we ourselves must take the initiative."

"Very good," said General De Bono.

There was to be a war. So much was obvious, as the packed transports moved cheering from the dock at Naples and slid with shaded decks along the narrow channel of the Suez Canal. But it was less apparent what the war was to be about. It was already recognised that modern wars began before they were declared, but it was still customary for wars to have a reason. This was embarrassing so long as Abyssinia failed to provide one by threatening the Italian colonies. St George himself could hardly ride against a dragon which declined to look the maiden's way. But as the new St George was quite resolved to have his ride, the maiden was reduced to challenging the dragon. A mild frontier affray at Walwal was vigorously exploited. But the Abyssinians insisted in the most annoying manner upon conforming to the strictest code of international deportment. For contrary to their expected role of unrestrained barbarians the dusky litigants demanded arbitration and referred the matter to the League of Nations,

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where an apologetic tribunal eventually held that no one was to blame.

This left the indignant white man with no reason to begin his war. Better, he seemed to feel, a war without a reason than no war at all. For if there was no war, there could be no colonial expansion in East Africa, no public demonstration of the martial virtues of Fascist Italy. As Mussolini's prime necessity was something in the nature of a Roman triumph, there would have to be a war. It was quite evident that, in the absence of a war, it would be difficult to have a triumph. For if there was to be one, there would have to be some captives; and where were they to come from, unless there was a war? It had been resolved that Italy must have a conquest; and having found somebody whom it would not be too difficult to conquer, the next thing was to have a war. After all, it had been definitely fixed to open in October, 1935; and since the timetable could hardly be disturbed by base considerations of morality, the duce cheerfully assumed the role of a barbaric conqueror which, by a pleasing paradox, had been declined by his intended victim in the distant hills of Abyssinia. But Mussolini's histrionic genius was equal to the part; and all that summer Italian war drums resounded in the ears of his young men. Their arms were vigorously sharpened, and the streets were loud with eloquence. It was not very long since he had stood on a palace balcony waving a rifle at them as a square full of halted schoolboys chanted rhythmically,

Libro e Moschetto
Fascista perfetto.

Here was a chance to use their rifles on an enemy who would not have too many of his own; and all that summer Italy was loud with happy war cries urging them to fight in cheerful disregard of what anybody else might think

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or do. Thought on such matters was comparatively unimportant. They were fully conversant with what English statesmen thought on the subject. But it was more to the purpose that they had a shrewd notion of just how much the French were likely to consent to do. For the obliging M. Laval, who was inclined to stretch a point for his Italian friends, had been to Rome. In face of a resurgent Germany there might be something to be said for meeting Italy halfway, for satisfying Mussolini at the Abyssinians' expense and thus retaining his regard. At any rate his conversation, in De Bono's view, "gave us reason to hope that if we did have to take action in East Africa France would put no obstacle in our way." If that were so, the path was relatively clear. The troops were massed behind the frontier now—tanks, artillery, machine guns, armoured cars and more than a hundred aeroplanes—under orders to move forward into Abyssinia (which had not yet mobilised) as soon as Mussolini gave the word. His very latest letter indicated that it might come at any moment.

"Very good," said General De Bono for the last time.

That autumn an unpleasant comedy was played out at Geneva. The Council of the League of Nations was officially aware of two disputes between Italy and Abyssinia. One, which related to Walwal, had been disposed of. But the other, originating in Italian discontent with the continued existence of Abyssinia in anything resembling its present form, was far less manageable. Great Britain had already tried to satisfy Italian appetites by offering to bribe the Negus with a slice of British territory to cede something to his uncomfortable neighbours. But this was found to be quite insufficient. For Italy, it seemed, was after something larger, something in the nature of a protectorate; and Abyssinia felt a pardonable reluctance to terminate its own existence prematurely in this unworthy manner. Next

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an attempt was made by France and Britain to devise a half measure. But their endeavour was not facilitated by the persistent inability of Italian diplomacy to formulate Italian demands. (This reticence was not surprising, since Signor Mussolini had just given General De Bono 120 days in which to start the war.) So a joint suggestion that Abyssinia should be extensively reorganized by its European neighbours, while preserving its independence and even giving up to Italy such territory as it might feel inclined to cede, was lost in the increasing uproar; and when the League assembled, Italy submitted an eloquent and copious indictment charging Abyssinia with breach of faith and bellicose intentions which constituted a grave menace to the security of the Italian colonies in East Africa. This egregious composition was solemnly discussed; but when a representative of Abyssinia threatened to introduce a slight element of reality into these Gilbertian proceedings by an explicit allusion to Italian intentions, the charm of make-believe was broken and two outraged Italians walked with indignation from the room. After a scuffle on procedure a committee of the League, in happy unawareness that the date for the invasion of Abyssinia was already fixed, began to wrestle with the issues raised in the dispute. That was the bitter irony which underlay the whole unpleasant comedy. For while proceedings at Geneva almost seemed to show that European common sense was in process of substituting argument for force in the adjustment of the controversy, that was hardly how it looked in Africa, as the dust settled in the track of Mussolini's marching columns.

The farce proceeded. It was a grave charade played with impeccably straight faces. The leading player was a European government that had put two hundred thousand white troops into Africa in simulated terror of attacks at some future date, of which there was not the slightest evidence, by

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fragmentary native levies with rudimentary equipment; and, in the intervals of this remarkable impersonation, it constantly invoked with sustained ingenuity the circuitous procedure of a League which it was prepared to leave at any moment. There were other players in the piece as well; and a distinguished Englishman, whom chance had cast for the attractive role of honest citizen, was not uncontaminated by the prevailing air. Sir Samuel Hoare had recently succeeded to the post of foreign secretary after seven years passed in charge of Britain's relatively dwindling air power and a shorter, if more exacting, term successfully devoted to the official advocacy of Indian reform. His notions in the latter field accorded closely with those favoured by Lord Irwin, from whose viceroyalty the Indian Empire was now making a fair recovery under Lord Willingdon; and upon larger topics his mind kept step with that of Mr Baldwin, who found the younger man a sympathetic follower, even perhaps an heir presumptive. Their sympathy, indeed, accounted for his arduous promotion to the Foreign Office at a moment when his Indian labours might very properly have earned him an interval of rest. But Sir Samuel Hoare at fifty-five was vigorous. Athletic interests had earned him an eminent position in the world of lawn tennis, and skating was his forte. One September day, as the Abyssinian dispute still balanced at Geneva, the new foreign secretary addressed the League Assembly. He opened with congratulations to Dr Beneš, its new president, shyly tendered by the newest to the eldest foreign minister. Then, warming to his theme, he favoured the Assembly with an exposition of "the British mind," which foreigners might sometimes find a little difficult to understand. The nation's instinct, he informed them modestly, was usually sound; and its support of the League was both disinterested and idealistic—"It is the fashion sometimes in the world of today—a foolish

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fashion like many others in the world of today—to scoff at such ideals.” Not so Sir Samuel Hoare, who proceeded to assure his delighted audience that “the League stands, and my country stands with it, for the collective maintenance of the Covenant in its entirety, and particularly for steady and collective resistance to all acts of unprovoked aggression,” omitting only to inform them that, on the day before, he had agreed with M. Laval that this resistance should not for the time being take the drastic form of military sanctions, or an international blockade or the slightest interference with Italian communications through the Suez Canal. But his downright utterance contained no hint of these restrictions and that was hardly how an uninstructed world interpreted his speech. Delighted delegates acclaimed this British intimation of resistance to aggression and gratified constituents at home counted his Geneva speech for merit in passing judgment at the polls on fellow members of his government and party. Nor were they unassisted by Mr Baldwin’s repeated and unambiguous expressions of devotion to the League of Nations. The League, indeed, appeared in every metaphorical disguise as the sheet anchor, bulwark, pivot and foundation of the foreign policy for which Mr Baldwin’s government sought (and obtained) approval from the electorate a few weeks later.

Quite unaffected by a splendid oratorical display, whose “quiet firmness” earned a tribute from *The Times*, the Abyssinian dispute went on. As the denouement became more obvious, the actors at Geneva played their parts with diminishing conviction. It would be unjust to say that Italy threw off the mask, since in the later stages of the controversy she had scarcely worn one. But the last shreds of international decorum vanished from a naked situation when the Abyssinian frontier was violated by an invading army and the League was faced by the undoubted

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fact that one member had committed an unprovoked assault upon another. It was irrelevant that the assailant claimed to do so in the name of a superior degree of culture, since such distinctions were unknown to the League which would, indeed, have found it difficult to grade even its European members by their varying levels of civilisation. The facts were obvious; and if the Covenant was honestly applied, the consequences were no less obvious. On the third day of the war the Council of the League listened with perfect gravity to an Italian argument that military action was completely justified as a legitimate response to the challenge constituted by a belated Abyssinian mobilisation, which had taken place a day or so before, and to the still graver menace apparently implied in the withdrawal of the native troops thirty kilometres behind their own frontier. This interlude of solemn nonsense, followed by Italian bickering about the details of procedure, did not prevent the Council of the League from holding formally that Italy had gone to war in violation of the Covenant.

A crime had been committed, and the criminal's identity had been declared. What was to happen next? The law provided for due punishment, and it remained to be considered how far the law would be applied. That was the test of ultimate sincerity, by which every nation's faith in the collective form of international society would be tried. The first stage of the test was honourably passed by fifty states, when they affirmed the Council's judgment against Italy. But how should it be executed? The criminal was still at large and aggravating his offence as fast as Italian troops could march into, or Italian aeroplanes fly over, Abyssinian territory. In this unhappy situation fifty-two states, moved by varying degrees of indignation, resolved to cease exporting arms to Italy and purchasing Italian goods. The ends of justice would, they hoped, be reached by the resulting economic pressure, since the loss

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of funds derived from export sales would ultimately leave Italy without the means of paying for those indispensable supplies of oil, machinery, scrap metal, coal, boots, food-stuffs and other military stores which were still reaching her from foreign sources. It was a slender hope, depending on the prolongation of Abyssinian resistance against heavy odds; and Italy was at considerable pains to demonstrate that any steps to render these inconclusive measures more effective might involve those who took them in the war.

That risk, which underlay the whole collective system, was the final test of faith in it. For force must in the last analysis be met with force. An internal policy of non-resistance to armed violence would eventually condemn any society to dissolution; and international society was no exception to the rule. Was it prepared to take the risk? The first nation to count the cost of the collective system was Great Britain. This was not unnatural, since any effort on the part of Italy to break the ring must take the form of war with England. Blockade was an essentially maritime affair; and if it was intensified, the contest (if one ensued) would be between Italian blockade runners and British cruisers—and eventually between Italian bombers and British ships and naval bases in the Mediterranean. If, on the other hand, the world decided to cut the slender life line which connected the Italian forces in the field with their home bases, that highly vulnerable thread passed through the narrow waters of the Suez Canal and British forces would come into play at once as the guardians of Egypt. It was uncomfortably obvious in either case that Great Britain was thrust by the broad facts of sea power and geography into the forefront of the battle. She held the keys of Abyssinia; and Signor Mussolini showed his recognition of this unpalatable fact in an increasingly offensive tone and the strong reinforcement of his troops in Libya adjacent to the Egyptian frontier. A simul-

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taneous precaution brought a large proportion of the British navy to Alexandria, which was felt to be less open to attack than Malta as well as nearer to the vital gate of the canal. These naval preparations were supplemented by plain enquiries addressed to France, Spain, Jugoslavia, Greece and Turkey with a view to ascertaining how far Great Britain could count upon support from these coastal powers in the event of an Italian attack resulting in a Mediterranean war. France was embarrassed by the question, since nothing was further from M. Laval's wishes than to sacrifice a possible ally by fighting her for Abyssinia. But a reluctant and conditional affirmative was finally extracted from the French, and Great Britain faced the next stage in her uncomfortable problem. Should war with Italy be risked in order to enforce the wishes of the League of Nations?

Less than twelve months before, large numbers of Mr Baldwin's fellow countrymen had faced that very issue in an unofficial poll. It was a striking demonstration that, while ten million voters were prepared for economic measures against any nation that wrongfully insisted upon war, no less than six million (against two million negatives and two million abstentions) would consent to go the length of war itself. This impressive proof of fidelity to the League of Nations elicited from the prime minister his customary tribute of appreciative metaphors; and in his reply the League was hailed once more as the foundation, if not the sheet anchor, of British foreign policy. But popular enthusiasm for the League was sometimes misinterpreted in less enlightened quarters, where it was felt to be an indication that the British people had lost its martial spirit in a feeble preference for peaceful methods. This hasty judgment omitted to observe that large numbers of electors had actually been inclined by their declared preference for peaceful methods to support the League's

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decisions, if necessary, by resort to war. But the delusion in a minority of stationary minds that the League of Nations was synonymous with peace at any price induced a feeling that the League's numerous adherents in Great Britain could not be counted on in time of war; and this uneasy sense was not without its influence on ministers, as war with Italy became a possibility. Meanwhile they fought (and won) a general election in the character, to which Sir Samuel Hoare's pronouncement at Geneva had handsomely entitled them, of strong adherents of a League of Nations policy.

But what was it to be? Were they to make economic pressure a reality by denying Italy supplies of oil and thus bringing to a standstill every military lorry, armoured car and aeroplane in Abyssinia? It could be done; and the vivid nature of Italian apprehensions on the subject was plainly indicated by the shrill outcry, deepening to threats of war, when the League ventured to approach it. Or should they make a deal of some kind and thus avert the risk of war, the resulting strain on British sea power which might be wanted nearer home one day, and the inevitable loss of an ally to France in case a day of reckoning with Germany arrived? That was the choice facing British ministers, and their anxious calculations inclined them to the latter course. Mr Baldwin had once informed a Non-conformist audience that there was something in him—he thought it was his Quaker blood—which made him feel, when he conceived a matter to be one of principle, that he would go to the stake rather than give way. But that feeling was momentarily dormant in December, 1935. For one winter day after the general election his foreign secretary left for Switzerland en route for a skating holiday which was long overdue. Six months of Abyssinian diplomacy had proved a most unrestful sequel to his Parliamentary labours on the India Bill, and Sir Samuel Hoare

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was far from well. But he had been prevailed on by his colleagues to break the journey for a few hours in Paris and to have a word with M. Laval. That worthy was in a position to acquaint the tired traveller with the unpleasant fact (if it was one) that a restriction of Italian supplies of oil would be the signal for an attack upon the British fleet in Egyptian waters and that there might be some delay before French naval reinforcements would be available. This was the uncomfortable dilemma presented to a British minister between trains in Paris. If things had really got to such a point, it might be essential to prevent the League from entering in any hurry on the forbidden ground of oil sanctions. As matters stood at present, these were due to be discussed within the week; but an adjournment at Geneva could doubtless be obtained, if it could be shown that a negotiation for the settlement of the entire dispute had been initiated. An anxious man confronted with a threat of war in its most unprepossessing form might be excused for seeking refuge in the quiet haven of an adjournment; and the foreign secretary obligingly postponed his holiday for one day longer in order to remain in Paris and devise the basis of a settlement which would allow them to adjourn discussion of the explosive theme of oil. Then he went on to Switzerland.

The plan, as it emerged, proposed to leave the invaders in permanent and legal possession of almost all the territory which they had already occupied in defiance of the League and to assure them, in addition, of a handsome sphere of influence in what remained of Abyssinia. This might appear to be a generous reward of lawbreaking, as well as a remarkable fulfilment of the government's election pledges on the subject of the League of Nations. No doubt they were in order in endeavouring to settle the dispute. The League, in fact, had authorised it. But were they justified in doing so at such a price? That was the problem facing

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Mr Baldwin and his colleagues when the news arrived of what had been agreed in Paris. For the Hoare-Laval agreement involved a highly disagreeable conflict of divergent loyalties. If they applied the plan, its questionable features obviously strained their loyalty to the League, to say nothing of their own election promises. If they rejected it, they would be disloyal to an absent colleague who was now skating happily in Switzerland. There were grave reasons on account of which the plan might be expedient, but none which seemed to render it particularly moral. It was a most unpleasant choice and Mr Baldwin, less Cromwellian than might have been expected, resolved to give the plan a trial.

His first attempt to make a case for it was in a vein of mystery. His lips, he said, were not unsealed (a disability which so impressed the fancy of a popular cartoonist that he proceeded to embellish the prime minister, whenever possible, with a mouthpiece of adhesive tape); but at some future time he indicated that he would be able to give unanswerable reasons for his policy. This reticence was unconvincing, and his countrymen were almost uniformly unconvinced. Their active interest in politics is periodically stimulated by the recurrence of a general election, after which they are normally inclined to lapse into a general approval of what the government may choose to do. But, most unhappily for Mr Baldwin, this awkward controversy opened within a month of the last general election, while the public mind was still sensitive to politics. Besides, the question was exceptionally calculated to arouse deep echoes in the country, since it was quite unmistakably a moral issue. So the stage was set for an exciting and spontaneous insurrection of articulate opinion against Mr Baldwin's policy as indicated by the Hoare-Laval agreement. An angry public pelted members of the House of Commons, elected on the faith of their adherence to the League of

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Nations, with plain expressions of their view that Mr Baldwin had betrayed the League. So far as they could judge, the Hoare-Laval agreement bore no relation to anything that ministerial pronouncements had led them to expect; and their indignant verdict was that Mr Baldwin had qualified to wear the questionable laurels once decreed by Froude to Charles V, who "possessed in perfection the statesman's accomplishment of moving in one direction while looking in another." Here was an unprecedented check for a prime minister who had just won a general election. His customary allies in the press deserted him; and as the angry chorus swelled, it became evident that he would have to change direction. The plan itself had died a natural and painless death, because the Abyssinians proved unwilling to commit suicide along the lines that it so thoughtfully provided. But its part authors in the British Cabinet were still answerable to an indignant Parliament for having let their thoughts stray in this depraved direction; and what were they to answer? Mr Baldwin, it appeared, would have to guess again.

His first inspiration on the subject had singularly failed to please. Faced with the Hoare-Laval agreement, he had not felt that there was any principle involved in its apparent sacrifice of the League and Abyssinia, to say nothing of his own election promises. For if he had conceived the matter to be one of principle, his Quaker blood must (if his own appreciative diagnosis was correct) have told him so; and in that case he would prefer a journey to the stake to any thought of giving way. But that was not in the least how the plan had struck Mr Baldwin. He seemed to view it rather as an unsatisfactory expedient, as the best that could be made of a bad business. So, after one grimace at this unpalatable morsel, Mr Baldwin swallowed it and asked his countrymen to do the same. When they refused (and their vociferous refusal was growing louder every

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minute), he was ruefully compelled to reconsider the position. If they disapproved of his present policy, the only reasonable course, he felt, would be to find another for them—another policy, that is to say, and possibly another foreign secretary. Was any principle involved in this reversal? None, it appeared. Once more his Quaker blood gave him no indication and Mr Baldwin changed direction in prompt obedience to public clamour. Its angry tone was due, so far as he could see, to a belief that he had sacrificed the League and Abyssinia; and now, as there was nothing else to sacrifice, he sacrificed Sir Samuel Hoare.

Misfortune had pursued the foreign secretary. A skating accident marred his brief holiday; his health was shaken, and his career was temporarily closed by resignation. His explanation in the House of Commons was a lucid plea for the policy which he had framed with such disastrous consequences and for the apprehensions which had led to it. Mr Baldwin followed in his most sympathetic vein. His view of politics was often apt to be disparaging; and this unpleasant episode reminded him that an unhappy predecessor upon seeing his foreign secretary, with whom he was in disagreement, drop down dead had bitterly remarked that politics were "a cursed trade." After this depressing prelude he announced that he was going to be frank and to describe his part in the transaction, with which he confessed that he was not altogether satisfied. Had he been justified in sending Sir Samuel Hoare to Paris in imperfect health? This led him to lament in a familiar tone "the cruel lot of those who labour in the high places of this world." Then he proceeded to the plan itself, which had given him and his colleagues an unpleasant shock. But what were they to do? Repudiation would have been unjust to an absent colleague; and moved by this sentiment of chivalry (which had not extended to the League or Abyssinia), they had accepted it, although without en-

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thusiasm. At the time he had felt that the plan went too far, though not so far as to provoke the indignant outburst with which it had been greeted. That, he confessed, had been a great surprise. For he was not expecting the national explosion "on what I may call the ground of conscience and honour." But when he encountered it, he knew—he told the House of Commons that he knew—that he could go no further. Public feeling on a moral issue was, he observed, quite irresistible; and Mr Baldwin told his audience that he should not resist. If right was on his side, he was prepared to be unbending—"If there arose a storm when I knew I was in the right I would let it break on me, and I would either survive it or break. If I felt after examination of myself that there was in that storm something which showed me that, however unconsciously, I had done something that was not wise or right, then I would bow to it." This time, it seemed, the storm was right and Mr Baldwin bowed.

That was the final condemnation of the Hoare-Laval agreement, of which Mr Baldwin had once approved, and a salutary lesson of which the teaching was that, if moral issues were going to be raised in future, Mr Baldwin would be found upon the winning side. The whole uncomfortable exhibition left large numbers of his countrymen gravely dissatisfied with the prime minister and one eminent Conservative with the strangest feelings. For when the storm of disapproval was at its height, Mr Baldwin had informed Sir Austen Chamberlain that, if a vacancy occurred at the Foreign Office, he should wish to speak to him about it. Could Sir Austen have misunderstood this intimation, which was not without its influence in smoothing Mr Baldwin's path? For when the critical debate was over, he was duly sent for. But the ensuing conversation fell sadly short of Sir Austen's happy anticipations. True, their talk turned on the Foreign Office; but the prime

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minister confined himself to a pleasant intimation that, as Sir Austen was too old for office, he proposed to make Mr Anthony Eden his new foreign secretary.

So Sir Austen Chamberlain joined Abyssinia, the League of Nations and Sir Samuel Hoare among the victims of this unhappy episode, which sent Mr Eden to the Foreign Office with the problem still unsolved.

MARCH

Köln a. R.

THE MIST of a March morning crept up from the river, and the two cathedral spires rode serenely above the city roofs. Dogs barked, cars hooted, tram bells clanged; and as the town returned to life that morning, there was nothing to distinguish it from any other morning that Cologne had seen since the war. The Green Police were on their beats as usual, and there were no soldiers in the streets. But there had been no German soldiers about Cologne since 1918. For it had been agreed to leave the Rhineland unfortified and without garrisons, a solid pledge that Germany proposed to keep the peace. The Treaty of Versailles ordained it; the Treaty of Locarno repeated Germany's consent; and Herr Hitler had reaffirmed it more than once. An open frontier on the Rhine was Germany's assurance to the world of peaceable intentions. For if the Rhineland was exposed, it could never form a base of operations against France or Belgium and in its defenceless state the French could be in Frankfort long before a German army got within range of Strasbourg. So Cologne had grown quite accustomed to her empty barracks. They had stood empty ever since the unassuming English marched away ten years before; and on that Saturday in March, 1936, they were still empty.

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The Germans went to work, the Jews to synagogue, as on any other Saturday. (In Berlin the French, British, Belgian and Italian ambassadors had been invited to look in at the Wilhelmstrasse before the Reichstag met that morning.) But before midday they heard that troops were on the march among the tram lines on the far side of the river and had begun to cross the bridges. A Cologne policeman had told somebody, who wondered if it was the French, that German troops were coming; and a flight of aeroplanes was wheeling in the sky above the two cathedral spires. (The surprised ambassadors had just been handed a German memorandum stating that the Treaty of Locarno had ceased to exist with the result that Germany resumed the right to garrison the Rhineland. There was, however, no cause for alarm, since Germany was quite prepared to enter into treaties not to go to war with practically anybody except Czechoslovakia and Austria and even to rejoin the League of Nations.) The nine planes in formation above Cologne came from the German side, which was reassuring. But cautious residents, reflecting that the world might take a less indulgent view of their proceedings and had aeroplanes of its own, withdrew to shelter in their cellars to await events; and the first contingents marched in past empty pavements. But no consequences followed. It was after twelve o'clock. (A saluting figure, leather-coated against the March winds of Berlin and booted to ride the horse he never mounted, had hurried past the guard of honour outside the Reichstag. He was at the reading desk and roaring at his hearers now.) In Cologne they had emerged to find the infantry goose-stepping proudly past the halted band in the cathedral square with their grey uniforms and the unbecoming shrapnel helmet of the later stages of the war. German taste in military headgear is often highly infelicitous, with an unhappy tendency in early times to wear the horns of harmless ruminants, scarcely idealised

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by the excesses of Wagnerian costumiers. Time barely softened these into the monstrous silhouettes of Frederician hussars or clumsy versions of Napoleonic models; and when the spiked and gleaming *pickelhaube* perched ungracefully upon their heads, it challenged beauty and utility alike. So it was not surprising that the shrapnel helmet evolved for Kaiser Wilhelm's warriors was the most forbidding of all wartime headgear.

But the troops were coming. Now the pavements of Cologne were crowded to watch field officers on horseback riding three abreast with nosegays in their belts and grinning gunners on the jolting limbers, as the guns went by. The grey cathedral watched them pass that afternoon, as it had watched across the gleaming roofs one wet December day to see the Irish Guards march in with pounding drums through driving winter rain. But that was nearly eighteen years ago. The world was changing now; and these were German soldiers at the stiff *Parademarsch*, smiling apologetically above their flowers. Cologne, after the first alarm, had found its voice again; and as the troops went stiffly past, along the sidewalk arms went dutifully up and barking *Heils* rang out. All down the Rhine the streets were cheering now, and they were singing "Deutschland über alles" in Berlin.

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That morning's work with its unpleasant and exciting outcome was the continuation of a process which began three years before, when Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany. It is the melancholy fate of defeated nations to be governed, sooner or later, by statesmen bearing the egregious name of Adolf. France endured a similar experience after the tragedy of 1870, when she had recourse to Adolphe Thiers. For with the Second Empire shattered

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on the eastern battlefields, Napoleon III a prisoner of war, her capital shelled and starved into surrender, five milliard francs of indemnity to pay and sixteen departments under German occupation that bright-eyed little man, tightly buttoned into his frock coat, became her destiny. France lived through bitter days in his astringent company—the day of parting from Alsace-Lorraine, the March day that saw thirty thousand Germans march with clanging bands past the shuttered windows of the Champs Élysées and wheel into the empty square where statues of French cities sat watching through their long mourning veils, and the weeks of organised dementia that followed when Paris raved in the sudden madness of the Commune and French infantrymen with set faces fought their way across barricades of fighting Frenchmen into the capital of France. The reign of Adolphe Thiers was, in many ways, a grim business. But when it ended, France was erect again and in her right mind. For the indemnity was paid and the republic constituted. Europe watched with sympathetic admiration as France made her astonishing recovery. Something of herself had died in the raw shame of the defeats and the surrender. But with the dry rattle of the German drums still ringing in her ears France turned to face the world again and remade her life. And what a life it was, while Bizet, Saint-Saëns, Massenet and César Franck made music, Verlaine and Mallarmé wrote poetry, Flaubert and Zola shaped their prose, Hugo his prophecies and Manet, Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Pissarro and Degas painted pictures. Small wonder that within four years of the defeat the world turned once more to France, herself again.

Not so defeated Germany. For military failure was succeeded by political collapse, and an ignoble liquefaction submerged the nation's self-respect. Yet the defeat was less spectacular than France's forty years before. This time there had been no invasion. No besieging army

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drew an iron ring round Berlin or celebrated its success by marching with bands playing down Unter den Linden. But the brittle pride of Bismarck's empire was splintered by the shame of military failure. It had been born of military victory in 1864 and 1866 and 1870; and when it found defeat in 1918, there was no moral quality by which the shaken nerves of Germany could be steadied. The nation went to pieces, and its moral dissolution was reflected in an unedifying epoch of armed violence and halfhearted politics, of pretentious mediocrity in letters and nullity in art. This time no brave recovery compelled the admiration of the world. For government was insecure and the indemnity remained unpaid, while Germany ten, fifteen and even twenty years after the defeat still asked for pity. That had not been the mood in which defeated France faced Europe fifty years before under Adolphe Thiers. But as German self-pity deepened to despair, his opportunity came to another and quite dissimilar Adolf.

The war was fifteen years away when Adolf Hitler rose to power. But his reflections on his country's fate were largely a wartime production. Before the war this son of an Austrian *douanier* passed through an undistinguished youth with an increasing sense that he was not as other men. Two bound volumes of an old illustrated paper filled his mind with the events of 1870, with images of war and military power. A random course of reading gradually imparted to the growing youth the deadly certainties of the uneducated. As an Austrian, he felt an envious inferiority to Bismarck's Germany. Why should he be denied a share in the glories of St Privat and Sedan? Why could not all Germans be members of one glorious community? It was quite natural for a provincial lad in Upper Austria to have such feelings. They lived so near the frontier of Bavaria and had so much more in common with their German neighbours than with many of their

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fellow subjects in the Dual Monarchy. For as Austrians they were compelled to share their politics with unintelligible Czechs and questionable Magyars and even more exotic elements. But just across the German border there were people who spoke German like themselves and worshipped in the same Catholic tradition. It was almost inevitable that a provincial upbringing in Linz should make him a Pan-German, and when he tried his fortunes in Vienna the same lesson was enforced by much that he encountered in the capital. For on the pavements of Vienna he discovered those Jewish fellow subjects who were so painfully unlike himself. He noted how they dressed and how they cut their hair and asked himself if anyone who looked so odd could really be a German. Their dissimilarities offended his provincial taste for Germanic uniformity. Everybody had looked much the same in Linz, and things were infinitely simpler there in consequence. Already a Pan-German, he now found himself an anti-Semite. And there were other things about Vienna which the young artisan from Linz found uncongenial. He did not take kindly to trade unionism; and a course of visits to the Reichsrat impressed him with the visible (and often highly audible) defects of Parliamentary government as practised in Vienna.

But, more than anything, this young provincial with vaguely artistic aspirations developed a distinct shrinking from the urban masses among whom he was compelled to live. Most provincials are ineradicably bourgeois. Besides, his father was a minor functionary; and in Germanic states official uniform creates a deep gulf between those privileged to wear it and the common herd. So it was not surprising that he shrank consciously from the sights and sounds of proletarian degradation in a great city and remained unlikely to be captivated by any project of proletarian supremacy. Indeed, his sympathy was won at this time by the heroic

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spectacle of Kaiser Wilhelm striving to express himself with royal freedom in spite of the intolerable restraints imposed by mere politicians.

But while these influences formed his attitude to German politics, his education in the arts made little progress. His first inclination had been towards painting. But his arrival in Vienna brought him face to face with rows of large, impressive buildings. There had been nothing quite like this at home, and their nobility inclined him to the view that architecture might be his destiny. Training, however, was discovered to be requisite for architects; and as training was beyond his reach, he remained true to painting, though he retained in later life a vigorous penchant for architecture and town planning. Largely self-taught, his work was strictly unadventurous and mildly picturesque; and he acquired the strong distaste of all bad painters for art critics, viewing any form of Modernism with the austere disapproval of a pavement artist.

Life in Vienna disappointed him and he removed to Munich, where the world of art was scarcely more congenial to an aspirant with ideals that were so sadly out of harmony with those prevailing on the staff of *Jugend*. But at least it was a German capital, and in these more homogeneous surroundings he felt more at liberty to indulge his dreams of a Teutonic stud farm, where German could breed endlessly with German without those racial complications which distract the Viennese. He felt himself at home in Munich. After all, he came from Catholic and German Upper Austria and might be excused for feeling that, apart from frontier technicalities, he was no less Bavarian than any of his neighbours. Bavaria was now his spiritual home, and when the war came he availed himself with wild delight of the opportunity to serve Bavaria.

The war did not distress him. On the contrary, he "knelt and thanked Heaven with all my heart for having

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given me the good fortune of living in such times." He was a German now, and his racial consciousness was richly satisfied by the spectacle of a whole nation marching under wartime discipline. So much that troubled him in time of peace had disappeared in time of war. Life in Germany was infinitely simpler now that there was practically nothing left for anyone to disagree about. There was a gratifying absence of unwelcome points of view, a pleasing unanimity about the nation which satisfied his sense of symmetry. Now there could be no more teasing differences to bother him, since disagreement on essential matters was a criminal offence in wartime. It was all highly stimulating; and as he put on his uniform, the *heilige Rock* that so powerfully influences German minds, he felt himself one with the splendid blonde and bearded figures in old engravings of heroic deeds in 1870. How different things would be if only Germans could somehow be maintained at this heroic pitch in time of peace, all uniformed and all inspired by a common effort against a common enemy.

The spectacle of Germany in wartime became his inspiration; and through the years that followed he was haunted by the bright vision of a nation going dutifully about the business for which nations had been created. He had no illusions on the subject of the peaceful destiny of mankind, announcing cheerfully that "humanity has grown in perpetual conflict, eternal peace would lead it to the grave." Indeed, the first page of his interminable testament, *Mein Kampf*, informs the reader that when German territory ultimately proves insufficient for the maintenance of all the Germans, "their necessity will give rise to a moral right to acquire foreign lands. Then the ploughshare will give place to the sword, and the tears of war will make ready the harvests of the world that is to be." With such an outlook it was not surprising that he retained a kindly memory of the war years and a respect for wartime forms

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of national excitement. None of these impressed him more than the surprising efficacy, as it seemed to him, of British propaganda. Since it was quite inconceivable that Germans had antagonised the world by any defects of their own, it followed that the world's unfavourable estimate of their acts and character must have been artificially induced by some magic process of manipulation. He was profoundly impressed by its success and analysed the possibilities of organised deception with the enthusiasm of an apprentice. Here, it seemed, was a means of influencing human minds by which the tiresome processes of reason might be superseded. There was a great deal to be said for unreason; and in later years he was even to write eloquently in favour of hysteria—"The great revolutions of the world would have been inconceivable if their motive-power had been the bourgeois virtues which value calm and good order rather than fanatical and even hysterical passions."

But what was he to be fanatical about? After the war his interest in politics was stimulated by his country's tragic situation and by his own employment in a humble rank of anti-Communist espionage at Munich. The events of 1918 jarred terribly upon his hectic patriotism; and since it was unthinkable that the French and British armies owed their victory to military superiority, he attributed their success to the occult working of dark forces within Germany itself. This happy explanation left his faith in Germans unimpaired by their defeat, diverting his resentment to those influences which had made it possible. Where were they to be found? Plainly among those elements of which he disapproved. The fault must lie with those German citizens who were not quite so German as himself; and he detected it wherever there was any trace of Jewish blood or Socialist opinions. For either was a lapse from pure Germanism. He had been Pan-German from the start and learned his anti-Semitism at Vienna in Dr Lueger's school; and now his

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earlier antipathies rose to white heat in the electric furnace of postwar politics.

The trouble with the Jews, he found, was that they were not Germans. In consequence of this defect they never told the truth, as Germans did. Besides, they had an irritating way of arguing, which left him baffled and resentful; and the young spellbinder confessed with indignation that, after talking himself hoarse, he had never made a Jewish convert. Their phenomenal tenacity in face of such persuasion was, he felt, attributable to the unhappy fact that they had no ideals. This sad omission had debarred them from making any contribution to the life of civilised humanity; and, so far as he could ascertain, their artistic record (for he set great store by the arts) was either unskilful or derivative. In the major fields of music and architecture he found that they displayed no originality; and their evident inferiority was damagingly proved by their proficiency in writing plays, "an art requiring smaller powers of invention than any other." (It would seem that Shakespeare and Sophocles had not yet swum into the ken of this ardent countryman of Goethe and Schiller.) Indeed, when he surveyed their record, there was nothing to be said for Jews; and his opinions mounted to the shrill falsetto of obsession, as he vituperated "the young black-haired Jew, with a look of fiendish pleasure lighting up his face, spying for hours on the girl unconscious of her danger. . . ." He must rescue her, if only he could get to her in time; and as the nightmare rode him, imaginary ravishers with gloating masks danced endlessly before his troubled vision. But his *idée fixe* occasionally betrays the author of *Mein Kampf* into pure absurdity, as when he appears in the unaccustomed role of dress reformer with a solemn warning to Teutonic youth against the unwholesome practice of wearing trousers in the summer, since he holds that deleterious fashion guilty of the fatal fascination in-

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sidiously exercised upon innumerable German girls by "repulsive Jewish bastards with their bandy legs." Something was plainly wrong; and if it was the world, he was born to set it right.

That conviction grew upon him as he contemplated the cleansing virtues of intolerance—"The masses feel more reassured by a doctrine that excludes all others than by a liberal tolerance. Tolerance makes them feel lost . . ."—and the effective power of sustained and brutal persecution. Here he was lucid to a fault, explaining the unfortunate results attending any relaxation of the salutary pressure and insisting that "the first condition of success resides solely in the perpetually uniform application of force. But this persistence can only be the consequence of a settled spiritual conviction. Force which is not derived from a solid spiritual basis will be hesitating and uncertain. It lacks that stability which can only rest upon philosophic conceptions marked with fanaticism." Now he was getting something to be fanatical about as he watched postwar Germany and dreamed his angry dream of a resurgent "spirit of national pride, of haughty manliness and of hate, the child of rage." If only postwar Germany could learn to hate. Things had been infinitely better in the war, when they all had a common enemy to hate. For then their conscientious detestation of the Allies, which uncomprehending English students of the *Hymn of Hate* had found merely funny, gave them a common cause and nerved them to a common effort. But that was over now; and the fine unity of wartime had disintegrated into the unsatisfying controversies of peace, in which both sides were heard and that of which he disapproved unfortunately tended to prevail. His feverish vituperation of the Jews might give them back a common enemy and thus provide them with a common cause. These incantations would, if he succeeded, recall the wartime mood; and if his countrymen could learn to

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hate once more under his inspiration, a reunited nation might confront the world with the unwelcome spectacle of Germany, herself again.

Not that the Jews employed the whole of his considerable powers of dislike. There were the Socialists as well, although it was not altogether clear if he disapproved of them because their economics were at fault or because the social revolution was in some unsuspected manner helpful to international finance, of which he disapproved as well, or because Karl Marx had been a Jew. That was, of course, the truly sinister thing about them; and his instinct told him, without dwelling unduly upon details, that "the ultimate aim of Marxism is the destruction of all non-Jewish states." (This was a far-reaching programme, as there were no Jewish states at all.) But he remained unshakably convinced that the motive of destruction underlay all Socialist activity. And the worst thing about the Socialists was that they appeared to have a large majority. That did not prove that they were right. On the contrary, it only served to fortify his dark suspicion that "Marxism represents the effort of the Jew in the field of pure civilisation to exclude the influence of personality from all forms of human activity and to replace it with that of numbers." Numbers, it appeared, were little to his taste. If his adversaries had secure majorities, there was nothing to be said for numbers. They might find a place in some dismal doctrine of historical predestination which was only fit for Marxists. But those Calvinists of history were plainly wrong, since arithmetic was a tame expedient for Germany's salvation. His soaring fancy preferred a more heroic method, and he disclosed an operatic preference for soloists. For his mind ran unceasingly upon salvation by a single dominating personality—a Leader dominating those beneath him and a descending scale of minor personalities, each radiating healthful influence and dominating his

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inferiors, the *Gauleiter* within his *Gau*, the next beneath him in his smaller *Kreis*, and the last of all in his *Bezirk*, until all Germany was safely gripped in the concentric circles of the *Führerprinzip* with every German in his place below a slightly larger German than himself. He thought of it as a return to the salutary principles of government prevailing in the Prussian army—"once the most admirable instrument of the German people"—which had not hitherto been thought to throw much light upon contemporary politics. Never popular with politicians, the army which had failed to win the war was now distinctly out of fashion. But this enthusiast adored its past, its discipline, its German qualities. For, once an Austrian, he was a thorough German now and duly prostrate before the image of military authority which had been raised by Hindenburg and Ludendorff in the first of all wartime dictatorships. So it was not surprising that in his imaginary state authority came from above. That was the natural direction for it to come from in the mind of this disciple of the High Command. If Germany was to become once more what Germany had been in time of war, it must be governed from above. Republicans and even Communists might look beneath them in the masses for the source of their authority. Not so this eager rival of the Weimar Republic. For if that was built, like other democratic structures, on the consent of the governed and upwards from these commonplace foundations, Adolf Hitler's Germany would be constructed from the belfry down.

This noble challenge to the laws of gravity was richly decorated with its author's strong dislikes. But his beliefs included affirmations as well as vehement denials. For he had positive opinions in addition to his grand array of sulphurous repudiations. Foremost among these was a passionate belief, which he found so exasperating when it recurred in men of other races, that the Germans were a

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Chosen People. His faith was founded on a free adaptation of the eccentric system of ideas which had served the late Houston Stewart Chamberlain as a substitute for ethnology, assisted by the frequent gaps in his own private reading. To begin with, they were Aryans. This meant that they were members of a single race (whose claims had hitherto been sadly overlooked), to which humanity owed all that had ever been achieved in science, art, invention and technical accomplishment, with the result that "the permanence of civilisation depends on them. If they collapse, the beauty of this world goes to the grave with them." And, what was more, the Germans were the only Aryans that mattered. Once upon a time there were the Greeks, and now there were the Germans. Their numbers seemed absurdly small when he considered their immense importance to the human race, which made it all the more essential that they should be very careful of themselves. This meant that they must keep their blood unmixed with that of other races. For only if their racial purity was uncontaminated could the Germans "ripen to perform the mission destined for them by the Creator of the universe." That lofty task was vaguely indicated in his apocalyptic vision of a time when "in a distant future mankind will face problems that can only be solved by a master-people of the highest race controlling all the means and resources of the whole world."

This messianic destiny, which he predicted for the Germans, could only be attained if they contrived to stay the course; and that, in turn, depended upon whether they were able to maintain their racial purity. Here was the paramount requirement of a nation's greatness, "the key of all world history and of human civilisation." It was all so simple; and he asserted with an enviable sweep that "every decline that mattered before the War was in the last analysis attributable to a question of race." Egypt,

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Assyria, Greece, Rome, Spain, Holland, Venice . . . it was such a simple explanation of their fall; and he was not the man to be discouraged by the unfortunate career of those Australian aborigines who, in spite of a high degree of racial purity, had somehow failed to rise at all. For race, if it was only the right race, was everything; and he announced serenely that "mankind has but a single sacred right—a right that is the holiest of duties—to keep its blood pure in order that the best there is in man may be preserved for a more perfect development of these privileged creatures. A racial State must above all raise marriage from the degradation into which continued adulteration of the race has plunged it and restore the sanctity of an institution destined for the creation of beings in the Lord's image and not of monsters half-way between man and monkey."

This excited celibate harped on his theme with a magnificent persistence. It involved profound contempt for all regions of the world with mixed populations (including southern Italy and the United States) and a volcanic excommunication of all Jews, prostitutes and other menaces to German purity, together with a corresponding adulation of the sacred race. That was the unchanging object of his adoration. Its rights were paramount, entitling Germans to a *Reich* whose boundaries would include all of them and, when those proved insufficient for their sustenance, could be expanded in prompt deference to their requirements. For a Chosen People was plainly entitled to have room for growing, its divinely appointed *Lebensraum*. Were this denied them, there would have to be a war. The first page of *Mein Kampf* had said so; and a later chapter insisted nakedly that the duty of a patriotic party was to ensure to Germans all the territory to which they were entitled—"This action is the only one for which bloodshed is justified before God and our own German posterity." Frontiers, he announced, were made by man and could be changed by

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man. (If the French were in the way, so much the worse for France.) "The racial movement has no business to state the case for other peoples, but to fight for its own. . . . We are not the policemen of the well-known 'small nations,' but the soldiers of our own people." It followed that "*the right to earth and soil may come to be a duty, when a great people seems faced with ruin if it is unable to expand. Especially when it is not a question of some little negro tribe, but of Germany, mother of our lives, mother of all life, mother of all civilisation in the world today. Germany will be a world-power or nothing. . . .*"

Someone had said something of the kind before. But that had been before the war, when a misguided policy antagonised the English by a ridiculous pursuit of colonies instead of recognising England as Germany's predestined ally in a European war to conquer territory from the Russians. This was his ultimate design, and he announced it without concealment. It was to be the last crusade of the Teutonic Order; and for that lofty purpose "no sacrifice should have been too great to purchase British favour. They should have sacrificed colonies and sea-power and abstained from competition with British industry." That had been the Kaiser's fatal error; but, happily, the opportunity was still available. Russia was still their enemy, since Russia owned the lands that Germany desired. But if their destiny had pointed them to an attack on czarist Russia in the years before the war, it was a sacred duty now. For postwar Russia added to the crime of owning something that was required for Germany, the crowning guilt of Bolshevism.

There were obstacles, of course, confronting this inspiring programme. The frowning edifice of the peace treaties stood in the way; and he assailed it with the mounting waves of his invective. But his objective was plainly stated—"The *Reich*, as a State, must include all the Germans and should undertake two tasks: the first, to

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reunite and to preserve the precious resources owned by this people in the form of its aboriginal elements of race, and the second, to achieve their slow but sure arrival at a position of predominance." That was the goal of all world history for him, the end of all the long ascent; and when it came, the Germans would fulfil their mission. What was that? He stated it without false modesty as "the formation of a State which aims at the preservation and defence in all their purity of the noblest elements of our own people and of all mankind." But where was that to lead them? Here also he was no less positive. For he announced that if the German people had only been race conscious in the past, "the German *Reich* would be the master of the world today. The history of the world would have taken another course and no man can say whether humanity would not have reached the goal at which blind pacifists hope to arrive today by their snivelling and their whining: *a peace not ensured by olive-branches waved by tearful pacifists, but guaranteed by the conquering sword of a race of masters holding the whole world in the service of a superior civilisation.*"

That was the vision which inspired him and warmed the readers of *Mein Kampf*, a slightly unbalanced vision in which Teutonic megalomania luxuriated on a scale that relegated Von Treitschke's prewar gospel or the late General von Bernhardi's *Weltmacht oder Niedergang* to a modest corner. The racial crotchets of Houston Chamberlain, who had embarrassed his contemporaries by arguing that Jesus Christ and Dante were both Nordic types, reappeared in a Wagnerian décor. For the Bavarian intelligence of Adolf Hitler was fascinated by the misty images of wonder-working heroes, gnomes and maidens, both sub-aqueous and equestrian, which had once proved irresistible to King Ludwig among the spires and turrets of his hilltop palaces. He had a weakness for Bavarian hilltops as well. But he could be Prussian too; and the spare figure of *der*

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alte Fritz occasionally interfered with reveries of Lohengrin. That was the stuff his dream was made of; and it was pursued through an unsparing campaign of excited meetings, which grew steadily from pothouse brawls to monster demonstrations, of immense processions designed to awe onlookers with long lines of moving banners and the tramp of marching men, of an unceasing propaganda founded on his practical conviction that real decisions lie with "the credulous and simple-minded mass." Indeed, his confessions as an impresario were quite disarming in their candour. For he frankly envied the Catholic Church its music, its incense and its celibacy; and he recognised the vast advantage which the Communists derived from the unrivalled lowness of their appeal. Appeals to reason were excluded from his repertory too, since he retained a shrewd belief that crowds must love the lowest when they saw it. Others might direct their message to the rare sympathies of intellectuals. But his was firmly aimed a little lower down and at a larger target; and he projected his appeal with Theodore Roosevelt's conviction that "the public do not take to an etching. They want something along the lines of a circus poster. They do not wish fine details, and it is really not to be expected that they should see them. They want the broad strokes of the brush." He professed a fervent admiration of Mr Lloyd George's wartime speeches and held the fixed belief that "every great event which changed the course of history was due to spoken, not to written, words." The power of rhetoric impressed him deeply; and he records the glow of his discovery that he could speak himself.

But speech was not enough. Viewing the movement as a sort of "volcanic eruption of human passion and mentality roused by the cruel goddess of misery or by flaming brands of speech flung to the masses," he recognised that this simple act of spiritual incendiarism must be suppl-

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mented by systematic arson, by the ordered effort of his organised adherents. For a prophet could not do every much without a party; and strict organisation ensured the permanence of his effects. Like General Boulanger, who had once sought to raise the drooping spirits of defeated France with a National Republican party, he formed a party of his own and named it National Socialist. That was the instrument with which he might create the nation of his dreams, all uniformed and all animated by a single cause against a common enemy. For Hitler was a Boulanger who did not fail. A rare tactician, aided by a superficial absurdity which led political competitors to underrate him, he was able to obtain allies whom he discarded with alarming thoroughness when their utility was ended. Some were in exile, some in obscurity and some in their graves; and in 1936 Adolf Hitler was in the fourth year of his power.

2

What did it signify to Europe? His professed antagonism to the existing European order had been the basis of his rise to power, and its guardians abroad watched with misgivings. For his public utterances abounded in denunciations of the *Diktat* of Versailles. There was a tendency in some enlightened quarters to regret the harsher features of the peace treaties and to wish that Clemenceau, Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson had found time for a negotiated peace with Germany. True, no one had suggested at the time that anything of the description should be attempted. Indeed, the sole reaction of articulate opinion in most Allied countries had been a vigorous complaint that Germany was getting off too lightly, since the world recalled by whom the conflagration had been started and to whom it owed the embellishments of poison gas, promiscuous assassination of civilians by the un-

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restricted use of submarines, and bombing open towns. But the facts of 1918 had receded now; and it was largely overlooked that Germany had startled onlookers that year by a peace treaty imposed upon the Russians and depriving the defeated side of half its industry, one third of its agriculture and population, eighty-five per cent of its sugar-growing areas and eighty-nine per cent of its coal mines. For, compared with the Treaty of Versailles, the Peace of Brest-Litovsk was a *Diktat* by experts, before which the Allies' effort pales into insignificant and amateurish kindliness. But that indication of the German mind, devised by Ludendorff in 1918, was quite forgotten, as the *Diktat* of Versailles received the indignant thunders of Ludendorff's disciple.

But if the treaty system was abandoned, there was some uncertainty as to what was to be put in its place. After all, its reparation clauses had long ceased to operate in any form their authors could have recognized and it was thought that European peace rested upon the sounder base of the Locarno treaties, which had been negotiated with the free consent of Germany. At first the latest German ruler seemed to indicate that German needs would be fully satisfied by a recognition of equality (whatever that might mean) and by a modest but sufficient army of two hundred thousand men. That was in 1933. But by the next year his demand had risen to three hundred thousand men and an air force half as strong as that of France. Mildly alarmed by the rapidity and scale of German armaments (so far as they were known), the British government insinuated in a white paper that if Germany continued to prepare for war whilst intimating its desire for peace, its neighbours would be reluctantly compelled to follow this example. Early in 1935 a German proclamation reintroducing universal military service in violation of the peace treaty increased the army to five hundred thousand men and formed a most unpromising prelude to Anglo-German conversations at Berlin, in which the situation was

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surveyed at length by Hitler in impressive monologue and Sir John Simon was candidly informed that his overwhelming host "saw great difficulty in defining 'non-interference' in relation to Austria." This, indeed, was not surprising, as there was no reasonable doubt of his complicity in a recent murderous attempt to change the government of Austria. Herr Hitler was an Austrian; his interest in Austrian affairs was overpowering; and Nazi ethics made no undue difficulty about the murder of an Austrian chancellor of whom he disapproved. After all, a similar directness of approach had cleared the German stage of quite a number of superfluous performers in the murders and mass executions of June, 1934. Here was strange company for British ministers to keep. But, unperturbed by these appearances, the author of *Mein Kampf* proceeded with his fixed design of drawing England to his side, announcing in his frankest manner that the German navy would be fixed in future at a modest thirty-five per cent of that required to defend the more extensive overseas commitments of the British Empire. True, the Treaty of Versailles allowed them nothing that approached this standard. But as they had already disregarded with impunity its limitations on the German army, British ministers were ready to condone a similar offence in respect of naval armaments, if mitigated by a German undertaking to limit the wrongdoing to a degree that would not endanger England.

Here, it seemed, was the beginning of a European *sauve qui peut*. The French instinct of self-preservation, sorely tried by four German invasions (of which two were wholly unprovoked) within a century, had sought refuge after the war in an Anglo-American guarantee of France's frontiers. But this evaporated swiftly with the political collapse of Woodrow Wilson, and France was left to face the world with the resources of a declining population, supplemented

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by her friendship with Great Britain and a subsidiary system of alliances in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. So long as Germany was prostrate, the security of France was relatively unchallenged. But French lucidity always envisaged a return of Germany to active and resentful life. The German record indicated plainly what was likely to recur; and when the blow fell, Germany's increasing population would give it added weight. Haunted by these apprehensions, France handled European problems a little gingerly. Subscribing quite sincerely to the reconciliation of Locarno, she still relied more upon British friendship than upon a German signature. For though the causes of the war were rarely mentioned in enlightened circles elsewhere in Europe, France remembered that a German signature had not prevented German armies from invading Belgium in 1914. Were her fears justified when the civilian politicians of the Weimar Republic were replaced by Hitler's uniformed subordinates? She feared so; and French diplomatic activity redoubled in the search for guarantees of French security. It had long been recognised that individuals depend for their protection on the rule of law, and it was hoped that an analogous security had been created in international society by the sanctity of treaties. But were they sacred, when the provisions of the Treaty of Versailles on German armaments were cheerfully ignored and one signatory condoned the breach by an agreement that the lawbreaker could violate the treaty, if he did not violate too much? The Anglo-German naval treaty was a strange admission that the rules were what the players chose to make them. No one, it seemed, could accuse Sir John Simon of that undue legalism which was imputed to the French as a besetting sin; and France was quick to take alarm. For if the fixed positions of the peace treaty had been abandoned, France must find other defences. She had allies in the lesser European states;

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but if the Germans had bought England off, she would need more than that. There was still Russia; and as the German resurrection seemed to threaten French security, France turned towards an ally for whom Herr Hitler's olive branches were quite inconceivable.

But at the moment (this was in May, 1935) he did not seem inclined for further lawbreaking, since he informed the world that "the German Government do not intend to sign any treaty which seems to them incapable of fulfilment, but they will scrupulously observe every treaty voluntarily signed by them, even if it was drawn up before they took over the Government and power. They will therefore, in particular, observe and fulfil all obligations arising out of the Locarno Pact so long as the other parties to the treaty are also willing to adhere to the said pact."

This was not unpromising, since Locarno had expressly reaffirmed the clauses of the peace treaty relating to the Rhineland; and with that substantial guarantee there was a reasonable prospect of peace in Western Europe and security for France. It was frankly recognised that their observance involved a sacrifice by Germany. But in 1935 Hitler announced that they were quite prepared to make it, stating plainly that "the German Government regard the respecting of the demilitarized zones as an extremely difficult contribution for a sovereign state to make to the appeasement of Europe." He was slightly troubled by the effect on the nice balance of Locarno which might be exercised by the new Franco-Russian treaty. But France, Britain, Italy and Belgium assured the Germans that its symmetry was quite unimpaired; and German spokesmen appeared to be comparatively reassured, the foreign minister repeating in the last week of January, 1936, that "the German Government fully intended to respect the Treaty of Locarno." Indeed, a melting mood appeared to inform the German attitude to France in the first weeks

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of the new year. A Paris journalist informed his readers that Herr Hitler longed for Franco-German peace and was prepared to mitigate the anti-French pronouncements in *Mein Kampf* by a "correction in the great book of history." Distressed by the conclusion of a Franco-Russian pact, he had dilated on its gravity and his own mission to save the world from Bolshevism; but before they parted, his interviewer was informed that Hitler offered an entente with Germany—"You have before you a Germany 90 per cent of whose population has full confidence in its Leader, and this Leader says to you 'Let us be friends.'"

Was this the dawn? The interview was published on a Saturday, and by Monday the French ambassador in Berlin was asking Herr Hitler for his proposals. The latter was evasive, contending truly that his conversation had been held before the French ratified the Franco-Russian pact, although it was not published until afterwards. But the French ambassador persisted in the path of Franco-German friendship, which had been so warmly indicated to Herr Hitler's interviewers, and pressed for his proposals. The German wooer was not nearly so impulsive now and asked for time. The days went by. On Friday Mr Eden, encouraged by the tone of recent German utterances, suggested that the time had come for England, France and Germany to take a step towards the limitation of air armaments. His German interlocutor was noncommittal. But by the next day France and England had their answer. For on that Saturday in the first week of March the world was suddenly informed that German troops were in the Rhineland and "the Locarno Rhine pact has lost its inner meaning and ceased in practice to exist."

This summary repudiation of a treaty by which Germany had freely consented to be bound was based upon the plea that everything had been changed by the Franco-Russian pact. This interpretation of the pact was not accepted

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by the other signatories of the Locarno treaties, who still regarded their own obligations towards Germany as quite unimpaired. Not so the Führer. For where Red Russia was concerned, his reasoning was apt to function rather differently from that of other men. The French, it seemed, had chosen to befriend the Russians: woe, therefore, to the French. That was his summary conclusion, and he consigned the whole existing treaty system of Western Europe (except his precious naval pact with England) to the same inferno which he designed for Communists.

One German signature had gone, but he was ready with another, which could be attached to an agreement not to go to war with France or Belgium in the new conditions for a quarter of a century. And, what was more, if they chose to disarm their frontiers, Germany would positively do the same. Nor did this proposal exhaust Herr Hitler's generosity, since "now that Germany's equality of rights and the restoration of her full sovereignty over the entire territory of the German Reich have finally been attained, the German Government consider the chief reason for their withdrawal from the League of Nations to be removed. They are therefore willing to re-enter the League of Nations. In this connexion they express the expectation that in the course of a reasonable period the question of the separation of the League Covenant from its Versailles setting may be clarified through friendly negotiations."

While the world gasped and France stood to arms, Mr Eden went to Paris in the thoughtful custody of Lord Halifax. More thoughtful still, *The Times* informed them that Herr Hitler's sudden impulse afforded the bewildered continent "a chance to rebuild," although more superficial observers found in it a strong resemblance to Samson's action in pulling down the house about his ears. In the ensuing scuffle England restrained France from any form

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of law enforcement, Belgium showed some reluctance to assume once more the uncomfortable role of martyr, and at the moment Italy was scarcely able to assume much indignation at an act of violence. The Council of the League met at St James's Palace; the Germans were invited to submit their legal point about the Franco-Russian treaty to the Hague Court of International Justice, to suspend troop movements in the Rhineland and to leave the frontier unfortified, whilst England, France and Belgium hurriedly prepared the basis of joint operations in case of war. Meanwhile, it was noted with some satisfaction that the German peace offer was now extended to include Austria and Czechoslovakia. Could Germany mean any harm? The incorrigible M. Litvinov was rude enough to say so. But he was contradicted by Herr von Ribbentrop, when he arrived from Berlin. That rising hope of Germany's diplomacy urged that no court of law was qualified to judge the German grievance about the Franco-Russian treaty and that his country, in resuming all its rights in Western Germany, had awarded to itself full compensation for the French offence. In other words, the law having been taken into the right hands the episode, he felt, was closed, and Germany could now pursue her splendid aim of universal peace along the lines of Herr Hitler's "historical and unique offer."

This one-sided view must hold the field, unless they were prepared to go to war; and as that was not the case, the world agreed to think that nothing very much had happened which could not be adjusted by a long discussion. The discussion proved inconclusive, because Herr Hitler's interest in his proposals seemed to flag after the British government enquired "whether Germany regards herself as now in a position to conclude 'genuine treaties,'" adding a little mournfully that "negotiations for a treaty would be useless if one of the parties hereafter felt free to

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deny its obligations on the ground that that party was not at the time in a condition to conclude a binding treaty." The question, in the light of German dealings with the Locarno Treaty, was not unreasonable; but it was never answered. In practice nothing was conceded by the Germans. The troops remained; the Rhineland zone was fortified; Herr Hitler tasted once again the joys of an election as unilateral as his diplomacy; and the world went on.

But what came of it? A *fait accompli* had prevailed, and Europe passed at once into an era when binding treaties could be violated with complete impunity. The rule of law in international affairs was ended for the moment, since law inevitably vanishes from a society that is unwilling to enforce it. This was the first lesson of that March day's events and their loquacious aftermath. The rule of force replaced the rule of law in Europe; and a rueful world prepared itself to face the wasteful consequences of substituting war for litigation as a means of settling international disputes. For the German challenge was quite unmistakable. Great Britain had professed to hear it in the white paper of 1935 upon rearmament. But Mr Baldwin had not been precipitate in the restoration of his country's armaments; and the same moderation was discernible in his response to Germany's successful coup in 1936. For just a week after the German march into the Rhineland Sir Thomas Inskip was appointed minister for the co-ordination of defence.

One consolation lingered on the darkening scene, since it could hardly be denied that Europe had escaped a war by its recourse to consultation in the League of Nations instead of prompt reprisals. In the less organised society of prewar Europe any action comparable to that taken by the German government in March, 1936, must infallibly have led to war. The outbreak of 1914 sprang from far

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less explosive causes; and since no machinery for consultation and debate existed at the time, the requisite delay was unobtainable and Europe leaped to arms. That was not the fate of 1936, since the unheroic expedients of League procedure enabled, and even imposed, delay. Could Europe learn the lesson that the maintenance of an effective League was now the modest price that must be paid for peace?

MAY

Geneva

THE COUNCIL OF THE LEAGUE was back in its own home by the still waters of a lake in Switzerland. Its wanderings were over now, and its habitués returned with visible relief to their accustomed scene after the brief, exciting interlude of a London meeting, like the papacy restored from Babylonian exile at Avignon. Indeed, the League itself was not unlike a modern papacy. For there was the same high-minded effort to organise an international society within the framework of a universal code founded upon something that was not far short of supernatural authority; and though the League was unimpeded in its tactics by any claim to divine inspiration, its diplomacy was gravely hampered by a loftier morality than that professed by most of its competitors. Historical analogies are always tempting and occasionally just; and there were moments when observers were irresistibly reminded of the Elizabethan age, described by one of its historians as "a dangerous world of ideologies and despots, persecution, treacherous propaganda, broken treaties, and war under pretence of peace." After all, the Catholic society from which King Henry VIII had once withdrawn his people was something very like a papal League of Nations. Was it extravagant to think that if Rome had

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been the Geneva of the sixteenth century, Geneva might yet become the Rome of the twentieth? Yet that was a disturbing thought. For if it was a true comparison, the new papacy might have its Protestants as well; and if it was to have a Reformation of its own, it was a trifle disconcerting to recall that the Reformers had succeeded, while their orthodox contemporaries waited vainly for the restoration of a normalcy which did not return.

There had undeniably been elements of Fascism in the Reformation, a totalitarian impulse to discipline whole nations into uniformity, which the most eloquent of its historians had diagnosed with mournful candour. "Deep in the hearts of all Englishmen in that century lay the conviction that it was the duty of the magistrate to maintain truth, as well as to execute justice. Toleration was neither understood nor desired. The Protestants clamoured against persecution, not because it was persecution, but because truth was persecuted by falsehood; and, however furiously the hostile factions exclaimed each that the truth was with them and the falsehood with their enemies, neither the one nor the other disputed the obligation of the ruling powers to support the truth itself. So close the religious convictions of man lay to their hearts and passions, that if opinion had been left alone in their own hands, they would themselves have fought the battle of their beliefs with sharper weapons than argument." That melancholy diagnosis was no less applicable to the political and economic creeds prevailing in at least three European states four centuries later. Were Hitler and Mussolini the two-headed Luther of a new Reformation? Or were they just a passing and unpleasant episode in the slow evolution of two politically backward nations? If that was all, the deviation in humanity's advance would be comparatively brief. But if they were really durable, the consequences of their rule, composed in equal parts of tyranny at home

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and raucous tribalism abroad, extended far beyond the German and Italian borders. For when half the continent was doomed to live by the unwinking light of their naked affirmations of the supremacy of force and the sanctity of tribal impulses, what prospect had the other half of retaining an international society founded upon universal toleration and the rule of law? These were the principles of 1789 and 1918, of the Rights of Man and the League Covenant; and they were diametrically opposed to those enshrined in Mussolini's march on Rome or Hitler's Reichstag fire. There was a basic difference between the two sets of ideals which threatened the existence of any institution in which their adherents were to meet. Mr Lincoln had once warned the United States that "this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved—I do not expect the house to fall—but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other." The United States had solved the problem by the stern surgery of the Civil War, which fortified the Union beyond all possibilities of dissolution. Would Europe find its own solution by dissolving the embryonic Union provided by the League of Nations?

But general reflections rarely trouble international assemblies; and the Council of the League faced the items on the agenda of its May meeting with its accustomed fortitude. Fortitude, indeed, was requisite, since these related to the invasion of one member's territory by the armed forces of a fellow member. News had been received of their victorious arrival in the capital just a week before; and this embarrassing intelligence was followed by the proclamation of the king of Italy as emperor of Ethiopia—on the principle, presumably, that if imperialism was all that its unkinders critics said, a monarch could be king of his own country but emperor of someone else's. Here was one

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more unilateral proceeding (as it was fashionable to term unlawful acts in search of legal recognition) confronting an embarrassed world; and the League faced without enthusiasm the consequences of its own inaction in omitting to deny to the invader those supplies of oil without which the invasion would infallibly have stopped—and starved. For oil fuel was the key to Abyssinia, and the League had left it in Italian hands. The Covenant was plainly violated; and the violator had achieved his purpose in spite of the half-hearted measures imposed with international consent in order to deter him.

A pontifical authority challenged by an act of open disobedience must inevitably launch its thunderbolts of excommunication—or of sanctions. Otherwise its claim to exercise authority loses all meaning, because if no unpleasant consequences are to follow disobedience, there is no reason to obey. That reasoning had moved the League to act and to impose, by way of excommunication, such sanctions as it could bring itself to order. But now that it had acted and the excommunication had proved wholly ineffective to prevent the crime, what was to happen next? That was the unpleasant problem confronting members of the League, when news arrived that an Italian army was in Addis Ababa. It had no business to be there at all. But there it was; and what were they prepared to do about it?

Although the military facts had altered, the moral case was quite unchanged. Indeed, it was a little worse, because the stern necessities of war had led the Italians to break a few more treaties. For when operations conducted within the narrow limits of the niggardly restrictions imposed by international agreement upon warfare failed to produce results with the requisite rapidity, the Italian command ignored them freely. For what were international agreements in face of national necessity? True, they already

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had an overwhelming weight of metal and that unchallenged air supremacy to which one of Signor Mussolini's sons (prophetically named Vittorio) owed something that his happy recollection termed "magnificent sport." He sought it in a bomber with the delightful certainty that his quarry could not possibly retaliate; and the sportsman's keen æsthetic sense recalled the beauties of a bombing raid when "one group of horsemen gave me the impression of a budding rose unfolding as the bomb fell and blew them up. It was exceptionally good fun." Air warfare on these easy terms was roses, roses all the way. But, however gratifying to Italian sensibility, these operations conducted with mere explosives against mere combatants proved insufficient for the military timetable. For the war must be concluded at all costs before the weather broke or Italy began to feel the growing strain of sanctions and wartime expenditure. So bombs were superseded by the prohibited expedient of mustard gas sprayed from low-flying planes in breach of a convention duly signed and ratified by Fascist Italy, though bombs were still employed (in breach of earlier agreements) for dropping upon Red Cross hospitals in which gas casualties might receive treatment. This inspired device accelerated progress; and the scorched and blinded Abyssinians supplied a happy commentary on the civilising mission now assumed by Italy in Africa.

But what should Europe do? Marshal Badoglio was in Addis Ababa, and Signor Mussolini reached down to place the visionary crown of Ethiopia upon King Victor's head. Those were the facts; and if the world was not prepared to change them, it would be under the regrettable necessity of facing them. The League Council asked itself for time, and in the ensuing interval its members were left to their reflections. The English thought aloud with devastating candour, Mr Eden confessing bluntly that

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sanctions had failed, while Mr Baldwin ruminated publicly upon the horrors of a war in Europe and the admirable record of Sir Robert Walpole, as shown by his invariable preference for peace. And was it certain that his fellow subjects would consent to fight? That doubt was always gnawing at the root of Mr Baldwin's more heroic impulses. For he confessed to a conviction "that among the common people of Europe in many countries and in our own and in France there is such a loathing of war as such, not from fear but from a knowledge of what it may mean, that I sometimes wonder if they would march on any other occasion than if they believed their own frontiers were in danger. I do not know the answer to that question, but I often ask myself the question, and I wonder—and when you begin to wonder on these points your wonderings may travel a long way. . . ." But they could hardly travel far beyond the British frontier. For a rigid nationalism must be the consequence of such reflections, unless he was prepared to tell his countrymen that their own cause must be defended—as it had been more than once in British history—in a foreign quarrel. But he refrained in deference to his misgivings as to the nation's temper, interpreting the prevalent reluctance to fight for anything but peace as unwillingness to fight for peace itself. For the British government omitted to observe that the least bellicose adherent of the League of Nations union, however shy of purely patriotic wars, was perfectly prepared to fight with ardour at the bidding of the League; and in that fatal misconception Mr Baldwin withdrew his country from active operations in the cause of an international society.

The experiment had failed because it had not been completely tried; and the last word was spoken over it by Mr Neville Chamberlain, when he informed an audience with brutal candour that the policy of sanctions by the

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League had "failed to prevent war, failed to stop war, failed to save the victim of the aggressor" and that its continuance would be "the very midsummer of madness." His observation, in so far as it related to the time of year, was just; but was it altogether sane to face with equanimity the dissolution of the slender ties uniting international society? Mr Chamberlain would know one day.

JULY

July

again will our age and generation be called upon to face such stern and terrible days. Humanity cries out for peace and the assurance of peace . . ." This was not quite the tone in which armed sovereigns habitually addressed their troops on ceremonial occasions. But his experience of war had been more actual than most of theirs; and he had put a good deal of himself into the speech. "You will find in peace," he was telling them, "opportunities of duty and service as noble as any that bygone battlefields can show." The speech had cost him a good deal of trouble, because that was precisely what he had wished to say and to say it in the presence of the finest body of trained soldiers in Europe; and having said it, he presented colours, took salutes and rode sedately off parade, a small receding figure on a big charger at the head of a long scarlet column marching under the bright gleam of bayonets in the summer noon, marching off across the park towards the trees on Constitution Hill with the king riding at their head and the clear voice still ringing in their ears. "Humanity cries out for peace and the assurance of peace. . . ."

I

They had heard the same voice a few months earlier, soon after his accession, when he broadcasted a short inaugural. It was delivered on St David's Day in the bleak modernity of a studio in Broadcasting House, because the sovereign who had quietly discarded the ritual extravagance of special trains drove unobtrusively to Langham Place to give his talk like any other public speaker. There was not very much in it for them to listen to, until he came to speak to them about himself. "I am better known to you," he said, "as the Prince of Wales, as a man who, during the war and since, has had the opportunity of getting to know the people of nearly every country of the

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world under all conditions and circumstances. And although I now speak to you as the King, I am still that same man who has that experience and whose constant effort it will be to continue to promote the well-being of his fellow-men." It was a thrilling sentence for the mass of ordinary listeners, to whom he had imparted a strange feeling that they knew the Prince of Wales. For that sentiment had been the chief result of his prodigious activity in public life; and it was heartening for them to hear that he was still the man they used to know. Promotion might have come to him (as it occasionally came to them as well). But that would not greatly matter, if it had not altered him; and apparently it had not, since they had the thrill of hearing him speak to them that day on the old terms in his new surroundings. It signified that somebody they knew was king; and that was quite a new experience for thousands of his subjects. The thrill, perhaps, would have been even greater if they could have known that he had framed the words of this announcement for himself. For the first official draft of his inaugural had nothing of the kind about it. But the king seemed to feel the need of re-establishing his contact with them in this new capacity; and his typewriter tapped out the sentence which informed his subjects that he was still the man they knew.

That was good hearing, with its clear promise of a modern reign inaugurated by a king of forty-one. It was nearly two centuries since any king of England had succeeded at such an early age. For the longevity of Queen Victoria, by postponing her heirs' accession, had turned the monarchy into a rather elderly affair. Edward VII and George V were both middle aged when they succeeded, and a monarch who began to reign at forty-one seemed almost boyish in comparison. He had been the spokesman of a rising generation for so long that youth identified itself with him. Indeed, his looks were still so youthful that many of his

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older subjects were a little apt to overlook his age. It is unusual, however, to regard men of forty-one as adolescents. Besides, a king with such a training as his had been was not quite so young as he appeared. It was not easy to say just how many years of average experience had been crowded into his career. How many of his seniors had seen as much of modern enterprise in five continents, had listened to the eager talk of engineers, exporters, social workers, wool-growers, works foremen, shipowners, coal miners and farm hands. He had been hearing all their problems now for fifteen years; and if it was the business of a modern king to know about such things, there was not a more modern king in Europe.

This was the promise which was implicit in his long experience as Prince of Wales. He knew the world; he knew how ordinary people lived; and he was a little apt to be impatient in those circles to which this knowledge had not yet penetrated. If it was the duty of a king to live in a restricted circle insulated from the modern world and to impersonate a passive dignitary of purely ceremonial significance, his vivid actuality might possibly unfit him for such a task. For he had learned the business of a modern king too well to play the part as a revival of old triumphs by his predecessors in the role. If a traditional performance of the character was all that was required, this antiquarian experiment was unlikely to interest him very much. But was that all there was for him to do? Hardly, because few of his predecessors had interpreted the part on such unenterprising lines. Applying their intelligence to an ever-changing problem, successive tenants of the throne contrived to harmonise remarkably with the varying requirements of succeeding generations. Any institution, after all, in order to survive adapts itself to the slow change of its surrounding circumstances. This was essential, if the monarchy was to retain its usefulness. Queen Victoria, in

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her supreme performance of the part, had scarcely tried to re-enact the monarchy of George III; and when her son succeeded, Edward VII played it in his own character rather than his mother's. These timely adaptations kept the institution up to date without damaging its continuity; and if it was to satisfy the needs that faced it in a changing world, what man was better qualified for reigning as a modern king?

There could be no doubt of his modernity. The note which he had always struck was nothing if not contemporary; and he belonged conspicuously to his own generation. Typical of that, he had created for himself a modern version of the Prince of Wales, which gratified the loyal instincts of vast audiences in and beyond the British Empire. It might be doubted if a mere traditional attempt to reproduce his grandfather's tophatted geniality would have commanded popular success in the years following the war. For tastes change, and few institutions can retain their popularity without varying their appeal. A Prince of Wales of the old pattern might have earned, at most, respectful acquiescence. But his world-wide popularity was the best evidence that the new version of the role accorded fully with the modern taste.

The same equipment fitted him to render the same service to the throne, to restate the ancient theme of monarchy in modern terms within the strictest limits of the constitution. If that was his conception, it would involve a frank avowal that there were some respects in which, almost inevitably,

The old order changeth, yielding place to new.

This was a development which certain quarters might accept with something less than Arthurian resignation. For all ships accumulate their barnacles which view the prospect of an overhaul with natural misgiving; and there were quarters in the higher levels of society, and even in proximity

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to the new sovereign, where the king's accession was surveyed with candid apprehension. Was he not a little younger than he might have been? Was he sufficiently exclusive? And was there a danger that he might have ideas of a character which would not command unqualified approval?

2

All reigns begin in mourning, but this time the mourning seemed to be almost unnaturally prolonged. The B.B.C. had already regaled its listeners with a slightly morbid vigil at the royal deathbed, which drove the more sensitive among them to the dim verge of hysteria. In the slow interval between King George's death and burial its mournful efforts induced a public mood that bordered upon melancholia; and even when the melancholy pageantry of the king's funeral had closed the chapter, the same temper seemed to persist. Their grief for King George V was genuine enough. His unassuming personality had emerged with credit from an extremely trying reign. Brave recovery from mortal illness had endeared him to his subjects; and the gruff kindness of his Christmas broadcasts brought him a good deal nearer to them than the practice of the court permitted. The celebration of his jubilee had recently enabled them to realise the strength of their attachment; and when death intervened so shortly afterwards to sever it, there was no doubt about their sense of loss. Yet even that was not permitted to obscure the pride with which the new reign was regarded. For they felt his son's accession to be an event of the happiest augury and waited hopefully for its rich promise to be fulfilled.

The note of mourning was sustained, however, in a restricted circle where these happy expectations were replaced by elderly misgivings. Was he not a little younger than he might have been? It was hardly possible to hail the

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fourteenth year of Mr Baldwin's alternating rule with Mr Ramsay MacDonald's (to say nothing of the fifteenth of Lord Craigavon's in Northern Ireland) as an age of youth; and it was natural, perhaps, for the old king's contemporaries to feel more at home with a monarch of their own generation. Besides, the privileged adepts of the last reign were bound to view the passing of their privilege with some dismay. Such transitions are the cruel consequence of monarchy, inherent in the institution and shared by all who serve it. But this time there was the added sting of transmitting their cherished privilege to a less restricted circle. Was he sufficiently exclusive? When thousands of his subjects had a novel feeling that somebody they knew was king, this might be open to some question. For there could be no doubt that the new sovereign's activities had broadened the basis of the throne. But, however valuable, that was a service which might well prove uncongenial in regions which had hitherto enjoyed the privilege of being its support and felt in no particular need of reinforcement. The basis of the throne was broad enough for them, and they would be less than human if they viewed with enthusiasm any lateral extension. Some courtiers had allowed themselves considerable freedom on the subject of the Prince of Wales; and the same note was audible in London drawing rooms that winter, where hopes of the new reign were qualified with vague misgivings. It was feared there would be changes; and King Edward's summary reform of the clocks at Sandringham, which had hitherto kept time peculiar to themselves in a sort of royal lotusland and were now recalled to normal hours, was felt to be symbolic.

3

"La royauté," Napoleon once said to Caulaincourt, *"est un rôle. Les souverains doivent toujours être en scène."* The

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king's appearances in the first months of the new reign were restricted by court mourning, and its sombre requirements severely modified their aspect. In place of a familiar figure with a highly individual taste in costume his public learned to know a sovereign in black, whose duties were performed with the old vigour. His short coat, black tie and bowler hat, emerging from large automobiles or hurrying to a duchy meeting, began to be identified with kingship. Indeed, one minister whose sense of monarchy was almost too acute was moved to private protest by a sovereign who positively walked across the road instead of driving twice the distance in a royal car in order to arrive at the same point and, what was worse, admitted the existence of the weather by using somebody's umbrella in the rain. Within a month of his accession he was questioning stallholders at the British Industries Fair; and a fortnight later Glasgow watched him hurry, with the big fur collar turned up to his ears, across a gangway into the sheer side of the Queen Mary. For three hours he explored the endless alleys of the liner; and his exploration, which took him a good deal further than its state apartments, was more than a formality. He had always wished to know how other people lived and worked; and his curiosity was richly satisfied. Then a bareheaded figure came out again, waving a bowler hat in cheerful greeting to the crowded workmen on the dock, and plunged into a grinning vortex of half the cloth caps on Clydeside. After that he drove off to see how Glasgow lived in a swift inspection of some recent housing. For he had resumed his former role of the indomitable visitor. But its significance was twice as great, because the smiling figure at the door was now the king's.

Not that his round of visits was confined to civilian occasions. For army, navy and air force were each duly called upon as well by a sovereign who had seen active service and could be embarked with safety on the last

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breathless word in speedboats. There was a reality about his visits which raised them far above the empty courtesies of public ceremonial, and they were performed with the old energy. He still needed all of that for a long day of interviews in London. Ministers, ambassadors and foreign visitors (he saw a high proportion of the European statesmen whom the March crisis brought to England) were all received and questioned in his new rooms at Buckingham Palace. That was where he went to do his work, although he was still living at York House (and ill-informed observers whispered that he was reluctant to leave it), until his mother's new home was ready for her.

His life was geared to the routine of royalty, and he was getting steadily into his stride. It would take him along the path which he had marked out for himself, from one duty to the next and from one royal residence to another. They could not all be equally congenial, since his tastes were quite as marked as any other man's; and if a hard-working official enjoyed the cheerful domesticity of Fort Belvedere, it was highly probable that he would find something a little formidable about Windsor Castle. Besides, a long tradition had confined the attractions of most royal *villeggiatura* to the shooting; and that was a taste King Edward hardly seemed to share in any strong degree. His appetite for exercise was scarcely satisfied by the comparative immobility of this august pursuit; and there was little to attract him in the opportunities for intercourse which it afforded. For these were all with persons of a class that did not greatly interest him. From his point of view, there was a great deal more to be said for a round of golf. One got more exercise at golf. Besides, the other golfers might be anyone from local mayors to foreign ministers; and, always practical, he found their conversation more rewarding than that of masters of foxhounds. With such tastes, it was not to be expected that he would feel the call of Sand-

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ringham quite so irresistibly as his predecessor on the throne. A brilliant shot and an enthusiastic amateur of agriculture, King George V had inherited his home at Sandringham and found a fascinating hobby in Norfolk farming. This pursuit, conducted on a considerable scale, did not commend itself so forcibly to his successor; and early in the reign King Edward appointed a committee to recommend the needful changes in his establishments. The committee was of unusual competence, since it consisted of a peer with the requisite experience and a royal duke who knew a good deal more about the local problem than his brother. The king duly acted upon its report, which was not ungenerous because the services of no employee were to be dispensed with until he had another job. But when public notice was attracted, stray critics singularly missed the point by tracing the king's hand in decisions which were not his alone.

Meanwhile, there were more important matters than the staff at Sandringham for him to think about—the state of trade, the state of Europe, an unpleasant outbreak of disorder in Palestine, the future prospects of the League of Nations and the pace at which Sir Thomas Inskip was likely to be able to replace the country's armaments. Mr Baldwin was involved in an unpleasant controversy with his late air minister, Lord Londonderry, in which the latter actually challenged the prime minister's veracity in stating that he had been misled by his former colleague on the crucial matter of the rate of German aeroplane construction. This complaint was subsequently attenuated by the prime minister's announcement that, in saying the government had been misled, he had not intended to reflect on anyone. It had been a trying year for Mr Baldwin, with the Abyssinian imbroglio, the dismissal of Sir Samuel Hoare and a painful episode that culminated in the departure of Mr J. H. Thomas after allegations involving the unauthorised

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disclosure of official information to speculative friends. The charges were denied. But after answering them, Mr Thomas terminated his career, and his resignation found Mr Baldwin in his most indulgent mood. "My dear Jim," wrote the prime minister, "you have acted as I should have done in your place. I accept your resignation with deep regret, which I know will be shared by all your colleagues. . . ." Here was no hint of his capacity for stern Cromwellian reproof.

4

The summer passed. King Edward's subjects faced *Things to Come* with what equanimity they could; and though Mr H. G. Wells's vision of an antiseptic future roused little enthusiasm, his vivid evocation of an intervening destruction of their world by aerial bombardment left a deep impression on the public mind which influenced it gravely. For there can be little doubt that their subsequent alarm, by which the course of British policy was seriously affected in September, 1938, owed something to a lively recollection of those painful (if imaginary) scenes, assisted subsequently by more recent press photographs of actual destruction in Spain and China. The events of March in Germany and of the summer at Geneva left an uncomfortable feeling that the international barometer was changing rapidly. They had lived for nearly twenty years in a world bounded by the peace treaties and the League of Nations. But these were ceasing fast to have the slightest influence upon events; and as the old landmarks receded, there was a growing sense that the postwar age was over.

Almost all the leading figures of the war had vanished now. That year Allenby and Beatty followed Haig and Jellicoe. The death of Venizelos left the indomitable figure of Lloyd George in solitary occupation of the stage, so

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crowded once, on which he and his contemporaries—Woodrow Wilson, Balfour, Clemenceau, Poincaré, Foch, Sonnino, Milner, House, Orlando, Hymans, Botha—had evolved the peace treaties; and in the absence of their authors the old standards almost ceased to signify. It was not altogether clear what substitute would be discovered. But new conditions were developing with some rapidity; and it was quite evident that the world of 1936 had turned its back upon the postwar epoch.

For men were looking forward now to something which they would not have found it easy to define. There was no lack of definitions of desirable objectives in the contemporary world. But the difficulty was that they were not all the same and their differences formed the most alarming feature of an uncomfortable situation. Until quite recently the common aspirations of mankind had seemed to point in the respectable direction of a peaceful life. But now they were diverging—Germany's towards a tribal resurrection founded on the martial virtues, Italy's in the direction of a Roman Empire towards whose reconstitution Abyssinia seemed to form a somewhat meagre start, and Japan's towards the mainland which was believed, perhaps erroneously, to belong to the Chinese. Elsewhere in the world—in the United States, France, Britain, Central Europe and the Balkans—the old ambition for a peaceful life was still retained in the unheroic form of a desire to be let alone. Not that there was anything ingloriously passive about this aspiration. For the United States, if let alone, proposed to persevere in the solution of their problems by the vigorous expedient of Mr Roosevelt's New Deal. France seemed likely to devote its leisure to a course of strenuous reform, applied along the lines victoriously advocated by the Popular Front and now embodied in the *expérience Blum*. In Spain President Azaña's administration proposed, if nothing intervened, to endow the five-year-old republic with "a regime

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of democratic ideals and liberty," as defined with unexpected moderation by the manifesto of the *Frente popular*. Austria, perhaps, would be content if circumstances merely let it go on existing; and the same was true in some degree of Czechoslovakia. But in most parts of the world the status quo had few attractions for the men of 1936.

This tendency, however, was not quite so marked in England, where politics were rather unadventurous. A habit of almost excessive reticence had grown on Mr Baldwin ever since the Abyssinian affair sealed his lips; and this restraint was felt in some quarters to be due to the circumstance that there was very little to restrain. His genius for letting things alone looked dangerously like indecision, and the quickening tempo of international affairs discredited those sober qualities which had commanded popular esteem in less eventful times. The prime minister was a diminished figure; and a mounting tide of criticism from his adversaries, and even from his own supporters, submerged his personal prestige. When he answered it, his replies were not particularly effective. Sometimes, indeed, he did not speak at all; and even when he spoke, he said extremely little. For six months—the most critical six months of European history since the war—he did not intervene in a single debate on foreign policy; and this remarkable reserve gave rise to an uneasy feeling that perhaps he had not got one. Nor was his influence more readily discernible in home affairs. A growing lassitude was visible in the prime minister. For Mr Baldwin had begun to feel the strain of his long term of office. With two brief interruptions he had been in office now for twenty years; and it was a disturbing thought that when he first became a minister, nearly half his fellow countrymen of 1936 were still unborn. In the summer a short interval of rest at Chequers inspired alarming rumours of his impending resignation. These, however, were dispelled; and

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as his countrymen resumed the common round of public life, there seemed little for them to look forward to.

An ageing premier, assisted by a rather futile Opposition, might render politics uninteresting; and there seemed to be no reason why this unenviable state of things should not go on forever. The same little group of rather jaded men rotated briskly round the seals of office, and their names continued to recur in varying arrangements, which amounted in the end to the same thing. This circle of familiar faces was congenial to Mr Baldwin, Sir John Simon's ubiquitous ability transferring effortlessly from diplomacy to home affairs and Sir Samuel Hoare, demonstratively hurled from office a few months before, returning unobtrusively. But there was one new element in national affairs, one bright event for Britain to look forward to. For King Edward had succeeded to the throne, and a hopeful public was already looking forward to his coronation.

That could hardly fail to be a great event. The date was fixed by proclamation for the next year, and a Commission had begun to wrestle with the fascinating problem of incorporating the Dominions in a mediæval ceremony of Byzantine origin. But this time its significance was likely to be more than ceremonial. For public homage to King Edward would mean more than that. The king was a young man of almost universal popularity. Was any other figure in the world (film stars included) half so widely known? His presence in the streets of any city from Stockholm to Buenos Aires would fill it with a cheering crowd; and in his own country if there were no monarchy, he would still have been the uncrowned king of England.

And now they were to see him crowned, a bright embodiment of their own generation elevated to supreme authority. Their seniors were always on the point of laying down the burden of responsibility and transmitting it to younger shoulders. It had been their favourite topic for years,

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although they rarely showed much tendency to act upon it. But now it was to happen in one case at least. That would be the splendid thing about King Edward's coronation. The crowds, the Abbey ritual, the roaring streets, the mutter of the organ, lifted coronets, the silver note of trumpets, prayers, benedictions, homage and the silken sound of robes—all the splendour of the coronation would be in honour of a man they knew, and its sanctity would consecrate a man of their own age. Small wonder half the world was making plans to come to London and see King Edward crowned.

Meanwhile, there was his work to do. Inspections, visits, papers, interviews—the royal round went on. Some of it was real, and some of it was merely formal. But even the formalities acquired a new reality from his vivid presence. One afternoon that summer he was to confer a royal bow upon the annual contingent of privileged young ladies, who were to be presented at an afternoon reception in the palace garden. Their host, a seated figure in civilian dress, bowed punctually as each young lady passed before him with a curtsy. A grey tophat reposed beside him on a little table; his court looked on approvingly; and a long line of waiting debutantes, restrained by a sufficiency of white cordage and stanchions, was marshalled by discreet attendants for their presentation. But the sky clouded over; rain began to fall; and soon there was a steady downpour. What was to be done? The moving line of debutantes was halted while the king left his chair to see the weather for himself. But there was no break in the sky; and there seemed little sense in continuing a ceremony which could only end in a meaningless parade of drenched young ladies in soaking finery. It could scarcely hope to be enjoyable; and the king, always practical, dismissed his guests to shelter. What purpose, after all, was likely to be served by keeping anyone in pouring rain in order to perform a curtsy? The exigencies of strict etiquette were duly satisfied by an official intimation

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that all the debutantes were deemed to have been presented irrespective of the fact that some of them had not; and, their social status thus preserved, they seemed to owe the preservation of their health (to say nothing of their millinery) to the king's common sense.

But this sensible decision on a matter of distinctly secondary importance left heartburnings in quite a number of eligible homes. For their proprietors had been deprived by an unhappy accident of feeling that the royal eye had rested for an instant on a daughter's toilette. That was their privilege—and his. Did he undervalue it? This was a disturbing thought which caused grave uncertainty in circles normally devoted to the throne. For their devotion, since they were only human, was not unconnected with their privilege; and if that were minimised by majesty, they could hardly be expected to feel quite the same. Was the king's action evidence that he regarded their cherished solemnity as something rather trivial? There was not the slightest indication of it in his proceedings on that rainy afternoon, since these appeared to be both rational and considerate. But even if there were, he might have answered, with Napoleon, "*J'ai un cœur, mais c'est un cœur de souverain. Je ne m'apitoie pas sur les larmes d'une duchesse, mais je suis touché des maux des peuples.*" That, however, is no consolation to the duchess; and as the summer passed, the more select among King Edward's subjects were increasingly engaged by the problem of his social life. Was he sufficiently exclusive?

Society itself had long abandoned any effort to remain select, although it still insisted upon maintaining the palpable pretence of being an aristocratic coterie. For the paradox of English society, as of other British institutions, lies in an infinite capacity for assimilating novel elements without modifying outward forms. The House of Lords looks much the same as when it was a committee of heredi-

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tary landowners, although its benches are adorned with manufacturers of novelties, newspaper proprietors of recent circulation and members of the Labour party innocent alike of factories or land. The same instinct for the preservation of external forms, while varying the content out of all recognition, marked the steady transformation of society. Disraeli had surveyed it fifty years before, contrasting the vanished world of Mr Canning with that of Mr Gladstone and observing that "the great world then, compared with the huge society of the present period, was limited in its proportions, and composed of elements more refined though far less various. It consisted mainly of the great landed aristocracy, who had quite absorbed the nabobs of India, and had nearly appropriated the huge West Indian fortunes. Occasionally, an eminent banker or merchant invested a large portion of his accumulations in land, and in the purchase of parliamentary influence, and was in time duly admitted into the sanctuary. But those vast and successful invasions of society by new classes which have since occurred, though impending, had not yet commenced. The manufacturers, the railway kings, the colossal contractors, the discoverers of nuggets, had not yet found their place in society and the senate." They did so, however, in Disraeli's lifetime, reinforced by those dignitaries of finance whom he could never have brought himself to disparage by terming them the money-changers; and in the outcome all forms of property were duly canonised by social recognition.

Before the end of Queen Victoria's reign success in trade and commerce had been added to the ownership of land as a patent of nobility, though candidates were still expected to go through the forms of country life in order to preserve the cherished legend that Great Britain was surmounted by a feudal aristocracy, assembled round the throne. This salutary process was accelerated by the healthy social catho-

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licity of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, who was sufficiently intelligent to be interested by interesting people irrespective of their ancestry or acreage; and when he succeeded to the throne, his modernity of outlook enlarged the magic circle. By the first decade of the twentieth century the social hierarchy corresponded roughly with the realities of English life. The pinnacle consisted of accumulated wealth in land united with an ancient title (occasionally reinforced by no less happy unions with transatlantic fortunes); and the lower grades of the nobility were formed by smaller fortunes or more recent (and consequently less impressive) names. Beneath this altitude a still lower plane of eminence contained the gentry, mainly territorial and consequently afflicted by the decline of agriculture, to say nothing of the dreaded incidence of Mr Lloyd George's taxation. Extremely moderate by later standards, this had terrified landowners into a panic-stricken feeling that the end was not far off. But when it came, it came from other causes, since the war accelerated the whole process of disintegration. A vast transfer of wealth was peacefully effected by taxation; and new social services, assisted by higher wage levels, absorbed a good deal of the property by which the upper class had been supported. The dilution of the House of Lords proceeded rapidly; and the hereditary system was severely modified by the cumulative consequences of succession duties, by which the privileges of inheritance were now reduced within comparatively modest limits.

The forms of aristocracy were still preserved, but the reality was vastly different. In the later years of George V nothing was quite what it pretended that it was. Sparse remnants of the old nobility pretended to be rich; the rich pretended to be noble; sporting stockbrokers masqueraded as fox-hunting squires; and practically everyone above a certain income level indulged in some form or other of social

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impersonation. The stately homes of England, in so far as they were occupied at all, were largely occupied by recent fortunes; and society was now recruited from an eager middle class after a brief financial scrutiny. It was a tolerable reproduction on a smaller scale of the extremely mixed community to which it claimed superiority. Professional success, commercial daring, American accretions, journalistic flair, financial shrewdness, ingenuity in politics—all these ingredients were represented in the House of Lords, although it still looked much the same as it had always looked. The British instinct for externals had preserved its outward aspect; but in their content and recruitment the nobility had been almost completely modernised except, perhaps, upon that lower level from which the smaller gentry still surveyed an increasingly inhospitable world. For county councils had deprived "the County" of its old significance in public life. Their finances were a long and wearing rearguard action, and there was little left to emphasise their own superiority except a county ball of sadly altered composition or the forms, the cherished forms (and what was happening to these?) of court.

Their battered little fortress was, perhaps, the last refuge of the old exclusiveness from which class could look comfortably down on class and individual on individual. Urban life had always an unpleasant power of reducing people to a common level. But far beyond the lighted streets of cities their little scales could still assess the right people and the wrong—especially the wrong—and could still determine the wrong thing to do, the wrong county to reside in (or even the wrong part of the right county), the wrong clothes to wear, the wrong side of the Atlantic to be born on. For they were still a little island of old prejudices in a country which had long outgrown them, a small embedded fragment of the social fauna of Victorian England in the vast and varied stratum of King Edward's.

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How did his social milieu harmonise with that of his contemporaries? Was he sufficiently exclusive? And, for that matter, were they? Like most things about him, it was devoid of all pretence. In choosing his own circle he did not pretend to be amused by people who did not amuse him or construct an unreal façade of purely decorative associations with impressive public figures. For he was never very good at simulating feelings that he did not share or doing things that he did not believe in. Besides, his working hours afforded ample opportunity for meeting almost all the people whom a leader of the nation ought to know. He met them on his never-ending round of visits; and his official callers at York House had included almost everything from high officials, large employers and diplomatists on leave to local worthies and enterprising authors with opinions on the spread of British influence in South America. But it was not to be expected that the circle of his intimates would reproduce the more forbidding features of his daily round. Such contacts, though instructive, were extremely wearing; and after the day's work there was a good deal to be said for something less exacting. Consciously or not, his circle was designed for purposes of entertainment. A change was what he needed, just as his subjects—or as many of them as could manage it—sought for a change once a week, some leaving town on Friday evenings, some watching games (or even playing them) on Saturday afternoons and some restricted by their harsher lot to the unbuttoned ease of Sunday mornings. He was an extremely busy man, and busy people are apt to take refuge in the dubious distractions of detective fiction or the cherished privacy of week-end retreats. He chose the latter. Always typical of his own generation, he relaxed as they did; and, like them, the king sought relaxation with friends of his own choosing.

His diverse and assorted friendships were eventually

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stigmatised by an excited prelate as "a social circle whose standards and ways of life are alien to all the best instincts and traditions of his people." This angry comment is a little difficult to understand, because the appetising innuendo is quite unsupported by the facts; and since its author was not admitted to the circle which he criticised, it rests on nothing better than hearsay. What is the suggestion? Was it intended to convey that the king's associates were on a lower moral plane than that occupied by the remainder of his subjects? If so, it was unjust. A fair sample of their age and class, the royal circle was practically indistinguishable from any corresponding social group of their contemporaries. Or was the allegation a simple-minded inference from the undoubted fact that some of them were not British born, a circumstance which (if strict patriots were to be believed) could hardly fail to have a deleterious effect upon their morals? It seems unlikely that a man of wide experience in church and public life could entertain this fancy; and one is left with a depressing sense that no high-minded observer of a cheerful coterie can observe it for any length of time without concluding that it must assemble for improper purposes. That dark suspicion regularly clouds the mind of each successive generation as it watches its own juniors at play. Youth is frequently misunderstood by age. But these unwholesome speculations of our seniors are rarely calculated to reflect the facts, which are apt to be far less exciting.

A cheerful coterie assembled round the Prince of Wales amused his leisure and continued to perform this salutary function after he succeeded to the throne. Its composition afforded him a welcome variant upon the crowding faces of his official life. Hard-working men are apt to draw their holiday companions from other circles than the stale repertory of their working day. Thus, members of the Bar are not compelled to play golf exclusively with members of the

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Law Society, authors with publishers or stockbrokers with other stockbrokers; and the king could hardly be expected to converse exclusively with courtiers. He enjoyed that privilege in working hours; and if it was not particularly exhilarating, he was not to blame. The conditions of their life, devoted to the sedulous discharge of unimportant duties for important persons, rob them of sparkle; and the unreality of many of their functions somehow tends to impair their sense of values, which rarely correspond with those prevailing in the outer world. For theirs is a world of one all-absorbing interest, whose concentration on a single object makes it practically one-dimensional in contrast with the solid universe outside. There is small demand in it for qualities that other circles hold in high esteem; and originality is frequently extinguished by a lifetime unselfishly devoted to playing second fiddle. In these circumstances the court was scarcely calculated to supply a young and active-minded man with stimulating company. He was the last person in the world to live contentedly enclosed within a royal circle composed of these uninteresting elements. Besides, it was not of his own choosing; and ready-made society is rarely a good fit. His tastes were individual; and if change was what he needed, it was likely to be found in the informal company of unofficial persons. Formality was something in which it was often necessary for him to indulge when he was on duty. He could be meticulous in the discharge of formal duties, but after they were done he escaped with natural relief to his own little world of friendly ease at Fort Belvedere.

His inclinations had recruited it from a wide area. King George's narrower experience tended to confine his friendships to congenial associations encountered along the path of service and official life. These formed a royal circle admirably suited to his interests in which, as years advanced, he was content to live. But his successor, born into a later

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world of infinitely less rigidity, was formed by service in an army whose professional exclusiveness was momentarily relaxed by the realities of war; and his later education took the form of extensive travel in new countries unprovided with the more exacting forms of social hierarchy. With such antecedents it was not surprising that he ranged more widely than his predecessor. For King Edward found his friendships in the freer air that lay beyond the charmed (if slightly oppressive) circle of court and service life. He had been encouraged to explore these spreading regions in the course of his official duties, which involved a survey of the modern world; and he was hardly to be blamed for discovering that they supplied distinctly better company. (His grandfather had made the same discovery without disturbing consequences fifty years before.) The world outside the palace railings always interested him. It was more entertaining; there was not nearly so much fuss; and there seemed to be a good deal more reality about its occupations. For that was where the business of the world was carried on and where so many of his friends came from. So when he was not working he preferred to rest in company that stood in a direct relation to the modern world. His choice was purely social, and since it was entirely unpolitical in its significance, his little world was scarcely more than a retreat to which a busy man withdrew in order to enjoy his leisure. Unlike King George III, who claimed political allegiance from a group of eager politicians known as the King's Friends, King Edward merely formed a pleasant circle of the king's friends. That was all they were, a little island of escape among the hurrying and crowded waters of his public life; and since the world of his contemporaries knew how hard he worked, they heard without dismay that the Prince of Wales—and then the king—was week-ending at Fort Belvedere.

There was not much about his friends for them to gossip

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over. The exciting topic of his marriage prospects had almost died of inanition long before he succeeded to the throne. For the dwindling band of eligible princesses, faint but pursuing, had withdrawn with resignation into singleness or less eligible matches. His name was scarcely quoted in the marriage market now. After all, the succession was assured by his brother's little girls; and his subjects acquiesced—some, perhaps, a little wistfully, but most of them with understanding—in the prospect of a reigning bachelor. They liked him far too well to contemplate with equanimity a loveless marriage of the Continental pattern. That might be good enough for Balkan royalty but hardly for the King of England. Manners had progressed beyond the *mariage de convenance*, by which dynastic problems had once been cynically settled; and the king was far too modern to participate in its obsolete pretence. Besides, his character was scarcely likely to accommodate itself to the unpleasant artifice which it involved. A strong sense of reality was evident in almost all his actions, and it was unlikely to desert him in considering the most sacred of all human problems. So the subject was allowed to drop, although a formal reference in the new Civil List to the possibility of marriage occasioned a slight flutter. But it was generally recognised that the king had shown himself supremely capable of single-handed public service; and his private circle was no longer scrutinised by eager matchmakers in search of likely consorts.

Not that his friendships were entirely masculine. Few single men of ordinary rank and average attraction reach forty-one without some woman friends, and he was no exception. For his little world was ornamental as well as entertaining, and its leading ornament was both. An acquaintance of some three years' standing, Mrs Ernest Simpson, was a little younger than her host. Born of good Southern family at Baltimore, Miss Wallis Warfield had

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been married to Lieutenant Spencer of the United States Navy Aviation Corps. But the marriage was a failure, and after eleven years it ended upon her petition in a Virginia divorce. She was in England now and married to Mr Ernest Simpson, a New Yorker of British origin who had left Harvard in the war to join the Coldstream Guards and was now engaged in the shipping business in London, where they made their home. Her status had enabled her to be presented to King George V and Queen Mary at the fourth court of 1931; and not long afterwards she met the Prince of Wales. Slim, dark, attractive, elegant, good company—this was as different as could well be imagined from the standard product of the English country house. American tradition had evolved a type with higher spirits and distinctly better manners. It was not only better company, but considerably better read and in many cases infinitely better dressed. Besides, a prince in search of friends could scarcely hope to find relief from the haunting sense of his own royalty in the society of his father's subjects. How could he escape a feeling that he was expected to be something rather more than human in the company of people over whom he was to reign? That gave a charm to American society which, added to its easy grace and lighter touch, inclined him almost irresistibly towards it; and it was not surprising that the central friendship of his little circle was American.

He was the last person in the world to change his friends because he changed his rank; and the king retained the friendships of the Prince of Wales. His work was harder now, and there was more need than ever of a friendly circle into which he could retire in its infrequent intervals. His private and official worlds, however, were not kept separate. That would have involved a species of manœuvre which was hardly to his taste. Fort Belvedere was not a Trianon; and as his friends were good enough to meet the king, they

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were plainly qualified to meet his ministers. This was apparent from the composition of a royal dinner party in the last week of May. For the company assembled in his narrow dining room at York House on the evening of Mahmoud's Derby comprised Lord and Lady Louis Mountbatten, the prime minister and Mrs Baldwin, his father's private secretary and Lady Wigram, the secretary of state for war and Lady Diana Duff Cooper, an equerry and his lady, the first sea lord, a West End hostess and—the New World redressing the balance of the Old—Mr and Mrs Simpson with an internationally known aviator and his wife, the daughter of a Morgan partner. (Mr Baldwin was not the first member of the Cabinet to meet Mrs Simpson, since at least one of his senior colleagues had made her acquaintance at his own request quite early in the reign.) The same blend was repeated later in the season, when the king entertained the Duke and Duchess of York, an ex-viceroy of India, four ministers and their ladies, Mr and Mrs Winston Churchill, Lady Oxford, another of his private secretaries, an official of the duchy, Lady Diana Duff Cooper, Mrs Simpson and another West End hostess. But this time, for reasons which became apparent later in the course of her divorce proceedings, Mrs Simpson came alone.

His work went on as usual that week. In the world outside, the League had just decreed the end of sanctions against Italy; a Danzig German at Geneva gave one of those preposterous exhibitions of bad manners by which the German soul is periodically reassured of German greatness; and Spain was unpleasantly excited by the murder of a leading royalist. At home the king inspected R.A.F. establishments through a long summer day, in the course of which he flew three hundred miles. But as the weather was uncertain and it was raining hard on the next day when he went over to inspect the Coldstream Guards, he spared them

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the discomfort of a soaking ceremony and, after taking the salute outside, paraded the battalion in the dining hall.

It was exactly a week later when he came riding through the arch on Constitution Hill, followed by the marching bayonets of six battalions of the guards. There was a scuffle in the crowd, and a dishevelled man flung something shining into the road in front of him. The king turned his head, looked for an instant and rode on, remarking that it was lucky that it had not burst. For he had more to do that morning and rode calmly down the hill between the trees towards the palace gates for the march past. He halted at the gate and sat his horse at the salute while the long column of the guards went stiffly by. Then he dismounted, and somebody told him that the object in the road had been a loaded revolver. It belonged to someone with an obscure sense of grievance against the Home Office and a hazy purpose of announcing it by shooting himself in the king's presence or even threatening the king. That was the story subsequently told at the Old Bailey. But, viewed from the king's saddle on that summer day, it looked dangerously like assassination and that—with audiences, afternoon receptions, interviews, inspections, tours and public speeches—was all part of the day's work.

II

Tetuan

ON THE SUMMER DAY that London saw King Edward ride across Hyde Park to meet the guards a plane came swooping from the west on Tetuan. The little town lay in the dusty Moorish sunshine between the grey mountains and the sea five miles away. Its pattern of white houses, crooked alleys, the tall minaret of Sidi Es Saïdi, town walls, grey olives and flat roofs tilted suddenly as the plane circled overhead; and when it landed, the civilian passenger (who had alarmed his pilot by a complete and dazzling change of costume on the long passage from Las Palmas) stood up, and General Francisco Franco stepped out to start a civil war in Spain.

This officer had served without repugnance under the republic and even filled the high position of chief of the general staff until his politics alarmed the government, causing him to be transferred to the more limited responsibilities of the command in the Canary Islands. A similar precaution relegated General Goded to the same insular repose in the Balearics. For generals were apt to be a more disturbing element in Spain than elsewhere. An unfortunate tradition of political activity had impelled them to diversify the history of the nineteenth century with all known varieties of military coup d'état and pronunciamiento;

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and their names were more generally remembered by reason of their politics (which were often of an impulsive character) than of their contributions to the art of war. For Spanish generalship, which had embellished the annals of its country's politics with the names of Espartero, Prim, Narvaez and O'Donnell, had taken generations to penetrate a few miles of Morocco and reduce the modest area comprised within the Spanish zone to a passable degree of colonial security. True, the victories (of both sides) in the long duel of the Carlist Wars stood to their credit. But as these were won over other Spaniards, perhaps they deserved to rank as political rather than as military operations. In any case, it was depressing to reflect that Spanish generals were at their best in civil war.

This tendency towards politics was naturally accelerated by their situation under the republic, which had inherited from King Alfonso no less than six hundred generals, six thousand colonels or majors and more admirals than were required to direct the movements of the British navy. The communal needs of a society conspicuous for the grosser forms of poverty and deficient in the most elementary social services endangered this generous establishment, and its more spirited components were naturally reluctant to repose much confidence in any form of government by which their country might be induced to do without them. It followed that in many cases high military rank was divorced from republican opinions, and soldiers of the republic were guilty of a crude disloyalty to the government by which they were employed, replaced by loyalty to something that they valued higher still.

For this unhappy conflict of allegiances was due to deeper causes than professional self-interest. Spain was changing, and its swift evolution in the years following the end of King Alfonso's reign inevitably ranged the military caste upon the side opposed to change. Isolated soldiers

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with progressive views might sympathise with the republic and the illimitable prospect of social transformation by which they seemed to be confronted. But for most military men a future under such auspices as these was filled with menace. How could the new Spain command the loyalty of men whose sympathies were bound to lie in the direction of an older order? Most soldiers are conservative; but the forces urging Spanish generals towards reaction were almost irresistible. Once soldiers of the king, they inevitably viewed his disappearance with regret. For armies naturally tend towards royalist opinions, and most revolutions experience an uncomfortable interval between the downfall of the throne and the decisive moment at which the army turns republican. Besides, the later stages of the Spanish monarchy had consecrated the attachment of the army to the throne by the transfer of all authority to General Primo de Rivera. His dictatorship encouraged military men to view themselves as masters of the nation, a version of the current European mode in autocrats which seemed congenial to Spanish tastes. But when it fell and was succeeded by a republic of essentially civilian character, the army suffered a political eclipse that left bitter memories; and as eager politicians settled into place and power, ambitious generals recalled with fond regret the happy days of military government.

The revolution of 1931 had destroyed their natural allegiance. But though the throne was gone, the altar still remained; and most Spanish soldiers were by long tradition soldiers of the Cross. The Church was gravely challenged by the new regime; and its devotees inevitably found themselves in opposition which was sometimes constitutional and sometimes of a more exciting character. Another tendency of the republic alarmed its adversaries by a threat to property. For if the dreadful load of Spanish poverty was ever to be lightened, it was plain that some-

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thing highly uncongenial to Spanish landowners was bound to happen; and since the military caste was largely drawn from the landowning class, another motive was supplied to Spanish generals for viewing the republic with distaste. Faith, loyalty, self-interest, ambition and finance all urged them in the same direction. Since this was precisely opposite to that in which their government was travelling (especially after the elections of 1936), it took them into treasonable paths. The old habit of military conspiracy revived, and Spain was soon confronted with an insurrection of the high command.

But in 1936 the attack and defence of property were something more than a mere local controversy. For the uncomfortable evolution of the postwar world had established on the Continent competing economic sects whose elementary and conflicting ideas upon the subject were for some reason termed ideologies. These rival groups attached themselves to their beliefs with a sectarian ardour, presenting many of the features hitherto associated with religious rivalry. For each group had sacred writings, which were expounded to the faithful by a pontifical authority; and both fortified their faith with a sufficiency of ritual and distinctive costumes. The Communist clenched fists, wore red, inclined himself towards the Kremlin and read *Das Kapital*, whilst anti-Communists with lifted arms displayed a preference for darker colourings, abominated Moscow, read *Mein Kampf* and turned for worship towards Rome or Berlin. Their doctrinal differences were almost wholly economic, since both communions originated among nations whose political experience was brief. In consequence they favoured simple forms of rigid public discipline, which were exceedingly old-fashioned by the standards of more advanced communities. But though there was not much to choose between their politics, they dwelt with angry fervour on

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the difference between their economics; and this doctrinal disagreement was quite inflammable enough to start a holy war. There was less prospect of a Communist *jehad* since Stalin had removed the primitive enthusiasts of world revolution from authority to exile (and even further) and concentrated Russian energies on Russian problems. But the anti-Communists of Germany and Italy were more militant; and if they were spoiling for a new crusade, any country was a tempting field in which the burning issue could be conveniently raised.

That was the most disagreeable feature of ideological differences. Other forms of disagreement only led to violence when nation went formally to war with nation; and such disputes were relatively manageable at an earlier stage by an established technique of international adjustments. But when conflicting doctrines confronted one another, violence was apt to be both inevitable and promiscuous, since there was an unpleasant tendency on the part of true believers in all parts of the world to intervene in the dispute, wherever it might be; and governments with strong convictions felt justified in doing much the same. For rifts in ideology seem naturally to bring wars of intervention in their train. That phenomenon had been no less familiar to King Henry VIII or the Emperor Charles V or Queen Elizabeth upon a spiritual issue than to Metternich upon the schism between revolutionaries and the existing European order, and to those Allied statesmen of more recent memory whose orthodox opinions upon economics led them to support White Russian generals against the Soviet. Such interventions often took the form of foreign inspiration and support for local insurrections. For spiritual sovereignties abroad tend to be incompatible with local loyalties and with the niceties of international decorum. It was significant that the English Reformation had been swiftly followed by rebellion in

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Ireland with a papal blessing and the hope of Spanish reinforcements; and there was no reason to suppose that the new pontiffs of Rome or Berchtesgaden would be less enterprising than their predecessors. In that event the Spanish Revolution might well be followed by a counterrevolution with German benedictions and Italian forces.

Indeed, there were compelling reasons of a military character to interest alert, acquisitive and doctrinaire regimes abroad in Spanish politics. For the creation of a sympathetic Spain might be extremely advantageous to German and Italian strategy. Both powers were adverse to France, and French military calculations would be gravely prejudiced by the new necessity of finding troops for the defence of the Franco-Spanish frontier, to say nothing of the threat to vital French communications with North Africa presented by the Balearic Islands and the eastern coast of Spain. Such a development would be no less unfavourable to Great Britain, since Spain faces two essential British highways. Its Atlantic and Moroccan ports look out upon the road that leads to Britain from North and South America, whilst its Mediterranean shore and islands command the way to Egypt and the East; and it was self-evident that these positions in unsympathetic hands would constitute a menace of the gravest character. Had not a British statesman, whose intelligence was acutely sensitive to British interests, insisted almost a century before "that for the future there should be neither an Austrian Spain nor a French Spain, but a Spain which should be Spanish"? For the simple facts of physical geography decreed that Spanish independence was a British interest of the first order. Lord Palmerston discerned it in his lucid statement that "it becomes essential that Spain should be politically independent as well as physically and morally strong; and that other nations should know that the foreign policy of Spain is guided by Spanish

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feelings and directed with a view to Spanish interests and is not made subservient to the policy of any other Power." But if this axiom was obvious in British (no less, perhaps, than in Spanish) interests, was it not plain that the reverse might equally commend itself to those who stood to gain from a reduction in the effectiveness of British sea power?

In these circumstances it was not surprising that the Harbour Service of the Reich Foreign Organisation was busily engaged at Barcelona, that easy ways were found for bales of Nazi propaganda to enter Cartagena and that reliable *Parteigenossen* were introduced into the cable stations at Vigo and Horta. If war should ever come, there was a good deal to be said for permeating Spain with German influence. But Germany was not the only power with ambitions in the Mediterranean; and Italy had long watched with interest the possibility of establishing a sympathetic government in Spain. Stray royalists, disgruntled generals and group leaders whose followers were termed indifferently Traditionalists or Renovators found a warm welcome in Fascist Rome and came away with promises of money and munitions. For a friendly Spain would add substantially to Signor Mussolini's resources in any effort to dominate the Mediterranean. Nor was his sympathy confined to gunrunning upon a modest scale. For in the week of General Franco's flight to Tetuan Italian military airmen were under orders for Morocco while the markings on their army planes were being painted out. Two crashed in French territory and one in the sea, and it emerged from this fatality that they were on their way to General Franco. Some reached their destination, and the official statement that they had come in order to repatriate Italian residents somehow lacked plausibility because their full equipment of machine guns seemed inconsistent with this errand of mercy.

Things were moving now behind the frontier of the

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Spanish Zone. For Franco had arrived; there was a swift concentration of Moorish *regulares* and the Foreign Legion; and a Spanish plane bombed headquarters at Tetuan without conviction. The general protested to the Spanish government in the assumed capacity of commander in chief of the fighting forces in Africa, alluding hopefully to the impending triumph of "the movement for the restoration of Spain." So here was one more military pronunciamiento. Nor was General Franco's action isolated, since other officers in other garrisons at home moved simultaneously. The dismal sequence of events had come full circle now. A Republican police officer had killed a Fascist; some Fascists subsequently killed the officer; his friends with mournful punctuality murdered a Fascist leader; and that murder was the sequel for a military insurrection of the Right.

This homicidal prelude had been played against the uncertain background of Spanish politics in 1936. The belated transformation of Spain into a modern state was far from simple and might well have been attended by those shocks which frequently accompany retarded action. But it was hardly possible to view the recent victory of the *Frente popular* at the elections as an alarming indication of extremist perils, since its revolutionary elements were heavily outnumbered by progressives of a normal type. For it consisted of fifteen Communists, eighty-seven Socialists and one hundred and thirty-six Republicans, a combination which effectively outnumbered Right and Centre. The new majority promptly installed a Liberal administration wholly free from Marxist elements. But indications of unrest in military quarters, where the election results were uncongenial, dictated changes in the high command; and Generals Goded and Franco found themselves transferred to outlying garrisons. An interlude of violence ensued, the masses celebrating their electoral success by forcible anticipations of a new

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order of society; and their intemperance evoked a violent response upon the other side. Those elements, which might have stabilised the government, felt themselves threatened and preferred to overturn it. The old poison of military conspiracy crept slowly through the army's veins, and Spanish generals prepared to act once more.

The outbreak, when it came, was more than usually punctual, although its appointed leader, General Sanjurjo, started two days late from Portugal and owing to an air accident failed to arrive at all. The garrisons were duly raised by their insurgent officers—successfully at Seville, Saragossa and Pamplona, and without success at Barcelona and Madrid. But though Goded failed in his attempt on Catalonia, Franco had come to Tetuan. His duty was to raise the army of Morocco in revolt; and long service with native *regulares* and the Foreign Legion qualified him for the task. He knew his native units well and had served with them in the discomfort of the Rif. Indeed, he had once commanded for the republic in the Spanish Zone, and now he was to take his old command—Moors, legionaries and air force (considerably supplemented by Italian contributions)—across the Straits to Andalusia in order to convince misguided fellow countrymen of error. In that crusade he did not disdain Italian machine guns or Moorish bayonets and, once a soldier of the Cross, became temporarily a soldier of the Crescent. The sacred call of politics came first, for Spain must be taught her lesson. An insurgent cruiser was dropping shells on Algeciras now in preparation for their landing. Spain would have to learn the error of her recent ways as the army of Morocco turned its back upon the stony soil and burned hillsides of North Africa. The Spanish army had not been very good at conquering Morocco. But there was a fair chance that, with Moorish aid and enough German and Italian support, it might conquer Spain.

III

Vimy Ridge

THE WAR was eighteen years away; and the ridge still looked out across the Artois levels towards Lens and Béthune, as it had looked through the driving sleet of Easter Monday, 1917. The clouds swept low that morning and the dawn was slow to come, as four divisions tightened their equipment, fingered weapons and waited to obey the order, "*The Canadian Corps will take the Vimy Ridge.*" Then the open diapason of the barrage crashed, and they went forward in the livid dawn to break the German line. All Canada from sea to sea was there—Ontario, Quebec, Patricias, Prairie Provinces, Montreal, Pacific Slope, the Maritimes, Toronto and the West. And now all Canada was there again. But this time it was a summer day, although the wind was blowing still. The place had fallen silent now. There were no guns. Only the murmur of a multitude, and the lift of the "Marseillaise" and the wail of pipes. All Canada from Halifax to Vancouver stood in its ranks again to face the ridge. But now there was nothing more in front of them than the pale slopes and the black-coated figure of the king at a reading desk, and above his head a great dipylon splitting the summer sky over the ridge.

He was there with them to dedicate their monument;

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and Canada was proud of a king whom they had launched on his career, of the prince who had come straight to them from the war, of the owner of the E.P. Ranch. They watched him walk bareheaded past naval and military guards of honour, plunge into the press of khaki berets that thrust cheerful cameras towards him and hurry off to receive the president of the republic. For the land, recovered by Canadians for France in those Easter snow flurries, was Canada's once more; and on the summer afternoon nineteen years afterwards the king played host in Artois to the French president. Then his morning coat and medals appeared above them at the reading desk. He was speaking now. "In the capital city of Canada, at the heart of the great Dominion, there is a memorial chamber set apart as a perpetual reminder of the service and losses of Canada in the Great War. Nine years ago"—it was on one of his innumerable journeys—"I had the privilege of dedicating the altar within it. . . ." And now the king was standing there addressing them again, with his hair blowing in the wind and the clouds sailing over Vimy Ridge.

"It was 'Over there' that the Canadian armies fought and died. It is 'Over there' that their final monument must stand. . . ." He knew as well as most men, for he had been with the Canadians when bugles sounded the "Cease fire" in 1918. "Already the scars of war have well nigh vanished from the fair landscape spread before us. Around us here today there is peace and the rebuilding of hope." They stood there on the silent hillside where Canada had waited for the dawn to come. The voice above them ceased. Then they saw a falling flag disclose a drooping marble figure, and they heard the bugles once again.

That night the king flew home from Calais. But he met them all again a few days later, when they followed

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him to London. For he was at home to Canada in the palace garden. It was not in the programme, which included a becoming specimen of Mr Baldwin's eloquence and reception at the palace by a royal duke. But the king appeared among them at the party on the palace lawn, shook more hands, faced their cameras once more and made a little speech about the rain which had come, as usual, where it was not wanted instead of in the west, where it was badly needed. For it was raining hard. But this time there were no debutantes, and the festivity proceeded. For Canada had launched him upon his career seventeen years before, and he repaid his debt to Canada.

AUGUST

Vigo

THE BIG BRITISH LINER, outward bound for the West Indies and Panama in the last week of August, was nosing its way round the capes to Vigo. They were just passing Finisterre, and some of the passengers had gone ashore the afternoon before to see Corunna. At least one of them was curious to see just what a Spanish port in insurgent territory looked like in the first month of a civil war. It was not his first visit to Corunna, and the aspect of the narrow streets irresistibly recalled one of history's lost causes. For they seemed to breathe the feverish, the rather wistful air of Jacobite Edinburgh or of Confederate Richmond. The effort was so very evident on every hand—excited automobiles on official business with flags fluttering and patriotic placards in their rear windows, young soldiers in new uniforms, a daily list of transport requisitioned for the cause and recruiting appeals to citizens of all ages from twenty to sixty displayed in the shop windows. There was no doubt about the effort. A rich profusion of badges, uniforms and published lists of patriotic gifts ranging from stray jewellery and gold coin to a pair of chickens attested it. But its direction was no less evident when blurred photographs filled the front pages of the local newspapers with files of kneeling youths receiving

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blessings from a happy priesthood and (to judge from the official press) a brisk renaissance of religion punctuated by executions of undesirables. This was the authentic Spain that tourists love, the brightly coloured homeland of processions, bullfights, devout señoritas and the Middle Ages exquisitely preserved to form an incomparable spectacle for modern eyes. But how long could they be preserved in the harsh world we live in? That seemed to be the unpleasant riddle confronting the insurrection.

Its present task, if one could judge from the rich crop of victories reported daily from the front, was simple. Reds fled in all directions, omitting to remove stupendous quantities of war material, while patriotic gunners in coast batteries filled pirate warships as full of holes as Gruyère cheeses. But the strange thing about it all was that these cataclysms appeared to leave the fighting line in much the same place as it was before, and the seaworthiness of hostile craft seemed oddly unaffected by their misadventures. That enigma was, however, the least significant of those by which the country was confronted. For, whichever side might win, how long could it remain the victor? That was (and is) the Spanish problem. If the republic won, would it succumb to those Communists on whose energies it had been forced to rely in its extremity? Or if the generals succeeded, how long could they keep Spain contented in the shadow of tradition? For clocks are easily put back, but afterwards they sometimes fail to go.

Not that the outward aspect of the insurrection was purely retrograde. For its appeal was salted with exciting condiments in the best modern taste; and the unchanging Spanish duel of ambitious generals and unsatisfactory politicians appeared to have been brought up to date by Fascist variations in the latest fashion. Young gentlemen in fresh blue overalls liberally sprinkled with unlikely badges dangled life preservers from their wrists and strolled

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casually round the streets with Lewis guns. The civil governor had just decreed that the Roman salute was compulsory, as indicating "the cordiality and energy so typical of new and old Spain and our descent from Latin civilisation, the light of the world, and the present emblem of fraternity between those peoples ablaze with love of country, whose good fortune it has been to free themselves from Marxist slavery." But the Latin model seemed to find less favour than the German pattern in this corner of the Peninsula, where the *Falange Española* had a tendency to scrawl swastikas on walls and the local bookshops were liberally stocked with the unsmiling visage of the Führer. To judge from their shelves, a rapid process of self-education in Nazi principles was already in progress; and a thoughtful leader writer on a local paper taught his readers to view their casualties as the unhappy victims of "Asiatic ferocity." (Whether this racial nicety impelled him to denominate the victims of our gallant Moors as falling before African chivalry did not appear.) How far this illuminating process could be carried was still obscure, since a population of the gloriously mixed ingredients which have gone to make up the Spaniard might seem to make an indifferent subject for the higher flights of racialism. But the general officer commanding at Seville, who turned out to be a spirited broadcaster, made a good beginning by informing listeners that the Moors were better Spaniards than the Communists. That had not been the view of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella four centuries before; but possibly a glance at *Das Kapital* would have convinced them of their error and impelled a reconciliation with Boabdil on the common basis of capitalist economics. In any case, it was amusing to reflect that the Church was bringing the Moors back to Spain.

Meanwhile, the *Falange* continued to explain itself profusely (if a trifle vaguely), to denounce party politicians

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in the manner customary with all new parties, to ingeminate *¡Arriba España!* and to scrawl up swastikas. That phenomenon left one British visitor wondering just how far it was desirable to have the swastika (or even the fasces) in Atlantic ports. For his countrymen had found the prospect most disturbing, he recalled, a quarter of a century before, when the Panther went to Agadir; and he wondered if she would have been more welcome at the time if Kaiser Wilhelm had sent that unit of his navy to Vigo or Ferrol—or even to Larache. The unpleasant thought left him murmuring "*Caveant consules*" and hoping that the British government would see the point in time.

Those were the casual reflections provoked by a walk through Corunna, with its unaccustomed air of movement and the thronging uniforms and lads in fancy dress and children playing war games in the street, while their elder—not so much elder—brothers leaned artlessly on rifles and strapped themselves to big automatics. They were playing in the little garden where all passing Englishmen pay their respects to the memory of Sir John Moore; and as Spain fought her gallant rearguard action covering a brave retreat towards the Middle Ages, it seemed somehow suitable that evening to make contact with it in full view of the big hills across the bay, on which Sir John Moore had fought the greatest rearguard action of them all.

But their ship was sailing, and Corunna faded in the mist behind. They thrashed slowly past the Spanish headlands; and the next afternoon they anchored in full view of Vigo. The bay, except for a destroyer flying the White Ensign and a dejected cargo boat at the quayside, was empty; and there was hardly anybody on the waterfront because of the superior attractions of something in the nature of a patriotic ceremony which was happening inland. But the interesting thing about the cargo boat was that it had just finished unloading two dozen Italian

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aeroplanes and that Italy had formally agreed that week to refrain from sending war material to Spain.

This obligation had lately been assumed in deference to an Anglo-French initiative. For M. Léon Blum, prime minister and leader of a popular front, was less sympathetic than might have been expected with the misadventures of a *Frente popular* beyond the Pyrenees and wisely apprehensive of the consequences which might follow an extension of the Spanish civil war. If French, German and Italian sympathisers came to blows in Spain, the European consequences of the imbroglio were manifestly unpredictable; and in order to avert embarrassments of this description he was active in promoting a system of nonintervention in the Spanish conflict. The suggestion was supported by Great Britain; and all Europe finally agreed to withhold munitions from both sets of combatants in Spain. If it was respected, this agreement might serve a useful purpose, although it placed a duly constituted government on the same basis as the rebel forces in a manner that was hardly just. But if his friends abroad refrained from arming General Franco, the republic would probably be able to deal with him; and as they had just signed a plain agreement not to do so, there were some grounds for thinking they might not. In that event nonintervention would become a reality, simultaneously eliminating foreign sources of supply for Spanish armies and relieving Europe from the menace of a general dispute. Otherwise, however, it would merely operate against whichever side in Spain had law-abiding friends abroad. If France withheld supplies, so much the worse for the republic; if Germany was less inhibited, her friends in Spain would be the gainers at the trifling cost of Germany's diminished reputation for conformity with public obligations. At any rate, that afternoon at Vigo made it tolerably plain what view Italian jurists were inclined to hold. For

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they obviously shared Talleyrand's sardonic definition of nonintervention as "a metaphysical and political term meaning almost the same thing as intervention"; and that wicked phrase contained the later history of the Spanish civil war.

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I

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THE PRESIDENT WAS SPEAKING, and the rich voice came across the hall—the same hall in which he had pledged himself and the Democratic National Convention of 1932 to “a new deal for the American people.” That was four years ago, when hopes burned low in the Depression and Chicago feared the worst and, not so far away, Detroit was already facing it. The worst had come in the next winter, as Depression deepened into a cataract of bank suspensions and the sands of Mr Hoover’s term ran out and a scared community turned with relief to the rough surgery of Mr Roosevelt’s expedients. And now he was back in Chicago, campaigning there again after four busy years of office and asking for a second term. But this time there was less need of promises. For he could point to a full record of performance. All that was required now was to invite 1936 to remember 1933; and he pressed home the simple point with more vigour than might have been expected of an orator who had begun to speak that morning two hundred miles away at St Louis and had already spoken seven times that day along the line of the C. and A. “Do you have a deposit in the bank? It is safer today than it has ever been in our history. It is guaranteed.” (That was good hearing for Chicago, where

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depositors had stood at windy corners hoping that the line would shuffle past the armed policemen at the door and reach the tellers' windows in time for their deposit to be paid out.) "Are you an investor? Your stocks and bonds are up to five- and six-year high levels. Are you a merchant? Your markets have the precious life-blood of purchasing power. Are you in industry? . . ." The cheerful catalogue proceeded with its bright record of more profits and less bankruptcies, mounting railroad freights and passenger receipts, steadier grain prices and improving sales of meat, as the President's eyeglasses gleamed and the upturned smile turned up still higher. There could not be much doubt that it was considerably better for Americans to be alive in 1936 than it had been in 1933. And whom had they to thank?

That was the simple issue raised in Mr Roosevelt's campaign. The dark shadow of Depression was still too near them for Republicans to argue with conviction that it had lifted of its own accord or because of something that Mr Hoover had just been on the point of doing when he went out of office. In any case, Mr Hoover was not in the race this time; and his substitute, who brought a reputation for local enterprise and financial probity from Kansas, was not a dangerous competitor. For Mr Landon did not photograph particularly well; his smile lacked power, and he was rather ineffective on the air. Besides, he had not lived through the last four years in the White House, while the nation watched the slow retreat of the economic cyclone and felt a hand on the controls. That was Mr Roosevelt's real strength in the campaign of 1936. Opinions might differ as to the merits of all that he had done. But it was not disputed that he had done something; and there was a general feeling that there was a good deal more to do. If that were so, he seemed to be the man to do it. For there was little sense in transferring

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the task to other people who did not believe in doing it at all.

The fatal slur of *laissez faire* still lay upon his rivals in spite of Mr Landon's gallant efforts to conduct himself progressively. No party can move faster than its old guard; and so long as their veterans insisted on revisiting the glimpses of the moon, it was not easy for Republicans to modernise their appeal. For Mr Hoover was a little apt to face the complications of contemporary problems with the simple-minded sociology of an engineer. The Democratic effort to create a modern state in the Jeffersonian wilderness elicited no more from him than stern reprobation of something that no good American should try to do. The chief object of his abhorrence was a "Planned Economy," as though planning was somehow immoral, an impious attempt to tamper with the divine order of the universe. Yet the Constitution of the United States had been a plan. So, for that matter, had the tariff. But neither of them drew the lightnings of Mr Hoover's disapproval, which flickered round the New Deal, since its planning appeared to trespass into regions where it was almost blasphemous to plan. Mankind was bound to accept the weather without planning—likewise, it seemed, the economic system. Yet there was not much evidence in recent happenings that the haphazard was necessarily better than the planned. Besides, pure uncontrolled capitalism had a plan, which satisfied its owners. The only question was whether its plan was a good one; and large numbers of Mr Roosevelt's contemporaries were reaching the conclusion that the published economic plans of a removable administration were vastly preferable to the undisclosed designs of proprietary groups.

But Mr Hoover rode serene above the flood, untroubled by such questionings. Without pausing to enquire whether "planned economy is an infection from Europe of creeping

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collectivism or whether it is a native American product"—and he had his own opinion about that—the ex-president, in a subsequent restatement of his economic faith, exulted in the splendid joys of uncontrolled economy. "American young men and women should have the right to plan, to live their own lives. . . . What they want of government is to keep the channels of opportunity open and equal. . . . They want rewards to the winners in the race." (If there should chance to be no racing on account of unemployment, that could not be helped.) "They do not want to be planed down to a pattern. To red-blooded men and women there is joy of work and there is joy in the battle of competition. . . ." He did not pause to analyse precisely how much joy it had afforded to those eleven million of them who, whatever might be the colour of their corpuscles, had been deprived of any opportunity to work in 1933. The important thing, it seemed, was to avert "the gigantic shift of government from the function of umpire to the function of directing, dictating and competing in our economic life." Yet casualties might be forgiven for preferring an ambulance to an umpire and even for aspiring to an amended code of rules under which, perhaps, they would not need to become casualties at all. It was quite in vain for Mr Hoover to urge in a more elevated tone that "the standards of human conduct must be erected upon a far higher base than government regulations and government controls. They spring from the Sermon on the Mount." For its precepts had scarcely been conspicuous in the Depression or during the prosperity of Mr Harding's term which went before it; and, at the moment, the New Deal was good enough for them.

That sentiment gave an immense force to Mr Roosevelt's appeal for a continuation of his authority. After all, his social policies had created a vast number of actual beneficiaries whom any interruption of his plans would

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disinherit. Unkind critics said that public expenditure upon relief had been judiciously directed by his party managers. But even if these beneficent activities were governed by abstract economics rather than by Mr Farley, they inevitably raised a vast crop of gratitude and hope that could be harvested in an election. The current saying that "You can't beat Santa Claus" was incontestable. (How long this sentiment would last was quite another matter. The lonely figure of Mr Lloyd George stood beyond the ocean, a bitter reminder of the impermanence of human gratitude as an effective motive in politics.) Besides, there was a larger sense in which the President still represented much that the United States were hoping for, apart from the mere satisfaction of individual necessities. Their faith in the old order had been irreparably damaged by the uncontrolled catastrophe of the Depression. But the new edifice of social services and economic regulation had only just begun to rise from its foundations; and there was obviously a good deal to be said for permitting its designer to complete the structure. That was all he asked; and a vast number of his fellow citizens seemed likely to accede to his request. In the campaign of 1936 Mr Roosevelt was asking for a vote of confidence in the New Deal, and there seemed every prospect that he would get it.

They were perfectly aware that there had been difficulties, that the Supreme Court had exercised its judicial function to the detriment of the New Deal. Perhaps that could not be helped, since the Court was the appointed guardian of the Constitution; and by reason of its origin in the interstate compact of 1789 the Constitution necessarily stood for a good deal of regionalism. But how far was regionalism possible in 1936? There could be no doubt that the first stage of American development had been facilitated by the freedom and diversity of local enterprise. "Federalism," as Bryce had written, "supplies the best

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means of developing a new and vast country." But though they were still vast, the United States were no longer new; and their experiences since 1929 had aged them considerably. Besides, the swift growth of modern transportation had made a unit of their vast and scattered territories; and the tendency of the whole nation's economic life towards interdependence confronted them with problems calling for administrative treatment upon national lines. Could these nationwide solutions be brought within the Constitution? That question faced the Court each time that a plaintiff challenged some local application of the New Deal; and it was not surprising that some of its decisions were adverse to the more sweeping measures of Mr Roosevelt's administration.

Admittedly the Founding Fathers had not contemplated anything that bore a remote resemblance to the legislation of the Seventy-third Congress; and when the dissimilarity became too glaring, the Supreme Court could not help handing down opinions which distressed the White House. This painful situation was alleviated by the fact that its decisions were not unanimous, that there were lawyers of sufficient eminence to sit in the Supreme Court who approved of the New Deal. Only there were not enough of them; and by majorities the Court successively disallowed administration measures upon oil production, government securities, railroad pensions, regulation of industry, control of agriculture, coal miners' pay and minimum wages. The whole area of the New Deal was devastated by judicial action; and the President was left complaining that "the majority of the Supreme Court was in fact legislating on the desirability rather than the constitutionality of laws." If so, it was exceeding its authority. Yet it was quite conceivable that judges might have political opinions and economic prejudices of their own. For, to some observers, the edifice of the New Deal was mounting

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with alarming speed to terrifying heights; and the erection of tall buildings is apt to provoke warning notices of "Ancient Lights" in the threatened windows of more venerable structures. One member of the Court had warned his colleagues against "personal economic predilections"; and it was sometimes possible to read their judgments as political pronouncements in judicial form. Few tribunals, placed in the same situation, would display an inhuman capacity for neglecting heaven-sent opportunities of disallowing legislation of which they disapproved. For the Constitution left them in much the same position of control as that once occupied in England by the House of Lords; and who could blame them if they acted in the same way?

Would the same consequences follow? Would America ring with the battle cries by which Englishmen had once been urged to end, mend, muzzle, modify, reform or alternatively rally round the House of Lords? There were so many aspects in which Mr Lloyd George appeared to be the prototype of Mr Roosevelt; and his Celtic eloquence had stirred British Liberals in 1910 with the rousing challenge of "People against Peers." But the Supreme Court was less vulnerable than a hereditary group of landowners; and Mr Roosevelt was far too wary to reproduce these shock tactics over the vastly different ground of American politics in 1936. A frontal attack on the Court would complicate the simple issue of his re-election and place his adversary in the favourable posture of a defender of the Constitution. That issue might suit Mr Landon. But though he was not a formidable adversary, there was no excuse for giving points away; and as the President could choose his ground, he chose it to his own advantage. So the sole issue raised in the campaign was the New Deal itself, and the electors were not invited to express a view as to the way in which the Supreme Court had discharged

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its duties. But if they approved the President's intentions, they decreed by implication that these should be passed into law, whatever doubts the Court might feel; and if the voters carried him to this position, the President would have reached a point at which the Supreme Court could hardly challenge him effectively. The Court, in fact, would be outflanked, and these judicious tactics would enable him to deal with it at his leisure.

But, for the time being, the decision of the nation was required on Mr Roosevelt's objectives rather than upon the constitutional adjustments that might be requisite in order to attain them. "Emphasis in the campaign," as he recorded later, "was therefore properly placed on the goal of a Government which, through the co-operation of all its branches, would make democracy work." If one branch would not co-operate, steps must be taken to ensure that the United States obtained the policies for which their preference had been expressed in the election. That problem was reserved for later treatment, and there was no reason to suppose that it would prove insoluble.

After all, the Court in spite of its immense (and, to foreign eyes, slightly disproportionate) prestige was nothing more than an expedient, designed for the protection of the sovereign people against encroachment by legislatures or executives. That was its purpose. But if it was developing a tendency to protect the sovereign people against themselves, it was encroaching in its turn and would have to be recalled to order. For, in the last analysis, the Supreme Court had no business to know better than the people of the United States. Pure politics were no concern of the nine justices in their marble monument at Washington, although there was some indication later that they were aware of these mundane realities. For when the shadow of the legislative axe eventually began to lengthen over them, the Court reversed its former attitude

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to the New Deal with creditable agility; and this manoeuvre, taken in conjunction with the highly opportune resignation of one of its most retrograde members, appeared to show that politics, no less than jurisprudence, might be the guiding star for some navigating officers of that impressive vessel. But this phase was still some months away. A time would come when Mr Roosevelt prepared to modify the Court by legislative action, a prospect that was deeply shocking to an Opposition actuated by a system of obscure, though deeply felt, taboos. For it emerged that all its leading members were prepared to do something almost as drastic in another way. But their consciences, which were habituated to regard with equanimity the packing of the Court by executive action, were quite unequal to the contemplation of the same tonic process, if performed with legislative powers.

But this controversy, in which Mr Roosevelt sustained his first rebuff, was postponed until the time for it arrived. That would not come until his countrymen returned him for a second term, and at the moment all his energies were concentrated upon this agreeable purpose. For there was a good deal to be said and done before the smooth black-beetle backs of official limousines could slide up the long avenue behind the racing motorcycles, as traffic lights turned green all the way from the Union Station to the White House and the President came home again.

For one thing, there was Mr Landon to be defeated and, for another, the newspaper press of the United States. A vast preponderance—he estimated it at about eighty-five per cent—opposed Mr Roosevelt, since newspaper proprietors shared the hostility with which other large industrialists regarded the New Deal. More than three quarters of the country's newspapers and magazines were adverse to his policies. But Mr Roosevelt, unlike his predecessors, was not forced to rely upon printed matter for his access to the

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public mind, since radio afforded him free entry to every home in the United States where there was a receiving set. This new resource enabled him to talk direct to the electors; and since control in democratic states depends on the formation of opinion, the development of radio transformed the balance of power. For it transferred the sceptre from the press to the broadcaster; and Mr Roosevelt campaigned serenely in a medium of which he was an unrivalled master. Not that he disdained the customary aids of presidential candidates, necessitating large subscriptions from those quarters which were still in a position to make them. For he had his friends in the possessing classes; and one student of the contest, surveying it from a point further to the Left, regarded it with chilly disapproval as a mere duel between heavy industry on the Republican side and the more popular requirements of light-goods industrialists, supported by department stores, textile manufacturers, tobacco and real estate, who were reconciled to the Democratic ticket. The President had forfeited the regard of those imperial grandees who wrote "Du Pont" upon their banners and, once Democrats in part, were now reputed to possess "more yachts, more pipe organs, more swimming pools, more ducal estates, and more bathrooms than any other family in the world" and to employ more servants than the royal family itself, including—by the calculations of one acrid statistician—the Life Guards. But though their mite swelled Mr Landon's total, heading a Homeric catalogue of Rockefellers, Mellons, Morgans, Vanderbilts and Mr William Randolph Hearst, the list of Mr Roosevelt's supporters was not devoid of wealthy names—some Democrats at heart and some, perhaps, who felt that the New Deal was worth a mass.

Yet, in some ways, it seemed to mark the end of an epoch of American development—of that concentration of authority in the hands of a small and brilliant group whose

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swift, acquisitive careers are the American equivalent of drum-and-trumpet history in the Old World. The Feudal Age of the patroons and the plantation owners had led in swift succession to an Age of Shippers, an Age of Bankers and then the Railroad Age, followed in due course by the Age of Combines; and now an heir of the patroons was campaigning for a wider distribution of control and wealth. The change was quite as drastic as those lately operated by the violence of European revolutionaries with the newest methods of armed demagoguery. The only difference was that their doctrine was quite indifferent to what the people, in its darkness, might desire. For that perversion of democracy leads direct to the brooding solitaires of Fascism behind guarded walls, watched by a fatalistic multitude. But where democracy is practised, a presidential candidate was to be found addressing his persuasions to a packed hall in Chicago (whose denizens were anything but fatalistic) with the prospect of a short night's rest, an early start by train, five lesser speeches on the road and a repetition of the same drastic process on the next evening at Detroit. That was Mr Roosevelt's technique, exhausting but effective; and if it took him to the White House again, it would be heartening to know there was one quarter of the world where democracy was on the march.

II

Fort Belvedere

THE HOLIDAYS WERE OVER, and the king was entertaining a few shooting guests at Sandringham.

He had been out of England for a month. The first notion was a Riviera holiday. But the French authorities, slightly fluttered by an effervescent summer and the uncomfortable proximity of the Spanish civil war, viewed this addition to the duties of the *Sûreté* with some anxiety; and in deference to their misgivings it had been abandoned in favour of a cruise in the eastern Mediterranean. A yacht was chartered, and as time was short, the king travelled overland to join the Nahlin at an Adriatic port in order to avoid the long sea passage from the English Channel. Besides, there was a fair amount of stray shooting going on that August in the Straits of Gibraltar; and it was hardly reasonable to expect Spanish enthusiasts to abandon the delights of naval gunnery in order to allow the king of England to enjoy a quiet holiday. So it was thought best to let the royal party travel overland. Indeed, their journey was protracted somewhat by the route selected for them by the Foreign Office. The natural proceeding would have been to sail from Venice. But this would involve a mild exchange of courtesies with the Italian

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authorities between the railway station and the yacht; and though sanctions had been abandoned now, a feeling still remained in some quarters that Italy's successful breach of international morality could hardly be condoned by a royal visit. True, the visit would be strictly unofficial and incognito, but a smile and handshake from the Duke of Lancaster had much the same effect—and would be quite as influential with Italian opinion, if that were worth considering—as the same sedative administered by the king himself. It might have been a timely action to allow the king to pass through Venice and anticipate Teutonic blandishments (which Latins always seem to find a shade embarrassing) by letting Signor Mussolini's subjects see a less forbidding countenance than Herr Hitler's fraternal scowl. For the Rome-Berlin alignment was still in an embryonic stage; and before it took shape, there might be something to be said for making use of this informal opportunity to show Italy that, if not forgiven, she was not quite forgotten. That would be the light touch in diplomacy, and the king's inclination lay in the direction of a friendly gesture. It would be a simple way of readmitting Italy to the charmed circle of international amenities. After all, his grandfather had often made a holiday serve broader purposes. But, like his grandfather, King Edward acted strictly upon his ministers' advice; and when authority decided otherwise, the yacht was duly sent to wait for them, ignoring Venice, at a small port in Jugoslavia. For the opportunity was deliberately missed, although the feeling which dictated the decision was not universal in the government, since it appeared to come as a complete surprise to one member of the Cabinet who travelled with them. So the royal party affirmed their loyalty to League principles by fetching a wide compass round Italy and were duly sent upon a hot and dusty detour through Jugoslavia in order to go on board the Nahlin at Sibenik.

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It was a royal holiday with its due complement of members of the household, minister in attendance and a route officially approved by the responsible department. They left Sibenik with the Yugoslav guns banging a royal salute; and for ten days they slipped in and out among the islands of the Adriatic coast, as swimming alternated with shore excursions and municipal receptions against an unchanging background of sea, sunshine and press photographers. Then they all went ashore at Athens, saw the sights, inspected the Greek navy and passed on towards the Dardanelles. As the grim bulk of the Peninsula climbed up the sky, Turkish destroyers came out to meet them; and the tall pillar on Cape Helles pointed the way taken by so many English, Scots, Welshmen, Australians and New Zealanders. A Turkish wreath went overboard where a British battleship still lay beneath the bright water of the Straits; and King Edward stepped ashore at Sedd el Bahr that morning not far from "V" landing, where they beached River Clyde under the dropping Turkish fire. For two hours he passed among the graves, the broken slopes, the steep gullies and the rusting wire of Gallipoli, laid his wreaths and cabled Canberra his assurance to Anzac survivors that "the last resting-places of their fallen comrades are well and reverently cared for." There is no place in the whole world more sharply redolent of the futility of war—and no man readier to accept its message—than that scene of wasted gallantry, watched by the hot beaches of the Peninsula, the cruel Suvla foreshore and the slow lift of Achi Baba towards the tall arch of the Turkish sky.

As the August day wore on, the yacht moved up the Narrows; and as it went, King Edward paid the tribute of his memory to Greeks, Persians, Athenians, Spartans, Turks and Englishmen in a small offering that slipped beneath the waters for which they all had fought. Then

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Gallipoli dropped back into the mists, and the bright levels of the Marmora opened in front of them. On the next morning they were anchored in the Golden Horn beneath the long ridge where the tall spears of the minarets keep guard above Stamboul. Mustafa Kemal, the master of new Turkey, was there to meet him; and the meeting was more than empty courtesy, since an Anglo-Turkish trade agreement had been signed two days earlier in London and, before the year was out, a Turkish fleet was exchanging compliments in Malta, and a British firm obtained a contract for three million pounds to instal an iron and steel plant in Anatolia. Here was the familiar trail of enterprise, by which his movements could be traced across three continents; and now the mark once left on South America by the Prince of Wales was made on Asia by King Edward.

The cruise was over now, and they left overland for England, travelling in Ataturk's special train. At Sofia he saw King Boris of Bulgaria, met the prince regent at Belgrade, called on the president and Dr Schuschnigg in Vienna and, these courtesies performed, flew home from Zurich. It had been a royal holiday, and the king on holiday had done royal work. For Turkey had been effortlessly brought within the circle of British friendship; and his summer cruise of 1936 pencilled associations which have since been overwritten by the ink of treaties. It is strange, though scarcely accidental, that British policy has subsequently followed with some exactitude the course of the Nahlin.

It was mid-September now; and on the night that he got back to England, the king dined with his mother. Then he was off to Scotland with the Duke of York, obedient to the call of Deeside. For that summons echoed annually in royal ears, and the autumn ritual of the Crown required a sojourn at Balmoral. Initiated by his

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great-grandmother (not without distress among Victorian statesmen), it had been an invariable part of his father's and grandfather's chosen holiday; and he conformed that autumn with a fitting rendering of the whole ceremony—arrival at Ballater Station, Sunday drive to Crathie Church and royal deerstalking. A retiring minister of Crathie was duly decorated in the castle library. But the king's version of Balmoral was, as usual, his own, since he filmed one stag instead of shooting it. His sincerity resented a parade of churchgoing. (His acts of worship were not uniformly treated as matter of record for the Court Circular.) When he went to church he went for the same reason as other men; and since he did not go in order to be seen, he hated to be stared at. So it was not surprising that on the next Sunday he deprived the Highland sight-seers of their Sabbath spectacle by substituting a closed car for the open carriage as he drove to Crathie Church.

It was a simpler version of the old Balmoral. For he always liked to simplify. (That month his subjects were regaled with the first postage stamps of the new reign and noted with relief a gratifying absence of dolphins, scrolls, frames, flourishes and unnecessary motifs, replaced by a plain background and the clear profile of the man they knew.) The royal house parties in Scotland showed the same blend of his private and official worlds as had been evident in London—royal dukes and duchesses, sporting grandees, official intimates, the peerage, minor royalty and his American friends. Indeed, his partiality for the last category was freely stated to have led him to postpone an engagement of long standing at the Aberdeen Infirmary in order to enable him to meet the train in which Mrs Simpson and another couple were arriving. The story even got into print; and in ten months it reached the ears of the lord provost, who was able to inform his countrymen—but not before the harm was done—that he had known months before the

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date arrived that the king was debarred by court mourning from appearing at the public ceremony, which would, however, be performed on his behalf by his brother and his brother's wife.

On the last day of the month the house party returned to London in the manner which was now becoming normal for royal travel, special coaches being attached to the ordinary night express instead of the old extravagance of special trains. In the morning he took breakfast at the palace with his mother, who was moving out that day into her new home across the Mall at Marlborough House. It was October now, and the king's holidays were over. He would soon be moving from York House to Buckingham Palace, and he stayed near London. He was mostly at Fort Belvedere; but in the third week of October he was entertaining a small shooting party at Sandringham when a message came that the prime minister would like to see him.

2

Mr Baldwin's holidays were over too. His health had not been good that summer, and he had taken an extended rest. It had been going on intermittently since June, when he was down at Chequers, though he was able to return to work in the next month. His customary holiday in France was sacrificed to a more profound repose at home; and in September he was still recuperating on medical advice under a hospitable roof in Norfolk. A final country visit prolonged his restoration, which was still proceeding when the National Union of Conservative and Unionist Associations met for their annual conference in the first week of October. But a few days later he interrupted his retirement in order to attend a private dinner at the House of Commons and assure his followers (accord-

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ing to one version) that his mistakes had invariably been followed by his most striking triumphs, although it was not altogether clear what error in the present instance gave reason to expect a triumph.

His holidays were ending now. The doctors still insisted that he should include October in his period of rest. But there was a good deal of work for the prime minister to do, and in deference to its demands he returned to Downing Street on October 12. Three months' arrears of work for a prime minister amount to something formidable even when his vigour is renewed by three months' holiday; and it is not surprising that its pressure was discreetly mitigated by a gradual approach. For he was only working, as he subsequently stated, "on half-time." Yet even at that modest pace there was a good deal for him to think about. The world of 1936 had never been an easy place; and as time went on, it grew less comfortable every month. There was an accumulation of unpleasant evidence that Europe was not a quiet neighbourhood for a peace-loving prime minister. Spain disintegrated in a civil war that seemed at any moment on the point of turning into a European conflict; France rocked on the uneasy waters of M. Blum's experiment; and in Russia a strange series of judicial proceedings afforded the unpleasing spectacle of the revolution consuming its own offspring in the worst manner of classical mythology. (That might mean that two of Britain's Continental associates would be immobilised in case of trouble.) Italy, emerging from her Abyssinian adventure, had defied the League of Nations with complete success and now viewed its members as defeated enemies, whose policy of sanctions drove her almost irresistibly into the waiting arms of Germany.

This combination, which began to emerge that autumn, was full of uncomfortable possibilities for England. And Germany was the most disturbing spectacle of all.

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For Germany, as Mr Baldwin knew, was arming at a pace that staggered his own experts and had concentrated its entire economy upon a single purpose, aptly summarised in the official preference of guns to butter. This tendency was not particularly new, since the process had been going on continuously ever since Herr Hitler's ascent to power. That was now three years ago; and a few perfunctory efforts at concealment only served to render it more obvious. For the first year or so Mr Baldwin seemed to view Germany's rearmament with unruffled equanimity, to cherish an apparent hope that German arms, if made, would not be used or, if used, would be used on someone else at a safe distance from Great Britain. Time alone would show; and Mr Baldwin had a strong belief in time. But as 1934 gave way to 1935 and 1935 passed into 1936, it became evident that something more than time was requisite, if Britain was to be defended. For Germany was now a formidable power; and three years after the evidence became unmistakable, Sir Thomas Inskip was appointed minister for the co-ordination of defence to do something of the kind for England. But the pace of Mr Baldwin's rearmament was not unduly hurried, since it was hoped that this might be achieved without unnecessarily dislocating civil industry with the harsh importunities of a Ministry of Supply; and it was gratifying that the Air Force had actually secured in 1936 no less than 1,462 men out of 1,512 whom they hoped to obtain as military pilots, though it was slightly disconcerting to discover that the War Office had failed to raise much more than half the number of recruits which was required. There was some uncertainty about the pace and time at which a hypothetical array of "shadow factories" would come into production, although it was impossible to overlook the rate at which German industry was now discharging all its military duties. The situation was uncomfortable; and it seemed as if the

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warnings uttered at short intervals with growing emphasis by Mr Winston Churchill had been irritatingly correct. Time had often been on Mr Baldwin's side. But was the problem of rearmament susceptible of effective treatment by time's healing power? His genius for letting things alone had often served him well. But its success was not invariable; and the pace of Mr Baldwin's rearmament in 1936 is indelibly recorded in the tragic impotence of Mr Baldwin's successor in September, 1938. If he had acted earlier, the ensuing situation would not have been the same. For it appeared that there were some problems which did not solve themselves by being let alone.

Another problem faced him, as the prime minister came gradually back to work that autumn. The king's domestic future was a matter to which Mr Baldwin's attention had been drawn at least six months before. It was a matter of some delicacy, which seemed to raise a problem. Had his sovereign's affections been engaged by Mrs Simpson, a married lady who had already divorced one husband, and did he propose to marry her as soon as it was lawful? Was this a problem which would solve itself by being let alone? The prime minister appeared to think so. For although he first heard of it quite early in the reign, he made no attempt to raise the matter with the king. The winter faded into spring; spring turned to summer; Mr and Mrs Baldwin found themselves at dinner in York House with Mr and Mrs Simpson and six other couples; and still no word was spoken by the prime minister upon this interesting topic. Mr Baldwin was the last man in the world to be precipitate, and the subject hardly lent itself to rash approaches. But if his information was reliable, there might be something to be said for raising it before the situation changed for the worse. After all, the lady was still the wife of Mr Ernest Simpson; and if Mr Baldwin intervened in time, she might—for all that

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he could tell—remain so. Timing was Herr Hitler's forte, but scarcely Mr Baldwin's; and, true to his own method, he decided to let matters rest.

The summer passed; and the prime minister was well enough to make some speeches, receive a deputation on the burning theme of House of Lords reform and address the Canadian ex-servicemen whom the king met at Vimy. But he said nothing to his sovereign upon the vital topic of his future; and in this interval of official silence the whole situation changed materially, because Mrs Simpson filed her petition for divorce. This step inevitably brought the awkward possibility, about which Mr Baldwin had been warned, appreciably nearer and simultaneously rendered any intervention on his part less likely to have practical results. For if her present marriage was a failure and the king intended to become her husband, it was highly improbable that any gentleman would feel himself at liberty to drop the notion after the lady had taken legal steps in order to obtain her freedom. But Mr Baldwin made no effort to dissuade him at this stage, and matters took their course.

The world went on holiday that summer—the prime minister to his much-needed rest, the king on his cruise and to Balmoral—and Mrs Simpson's presence in both royal parties excited journalists on either side of the Atlantic. Press photographers were busy along the Nahlin's course, though British readers were denied the fruit of these researches. But in the United States the odyssey of an American in royal circles was followed breathlessly. No reticence impedes American press comment upon public figures; and presently an unrelenting blaze of cheerful speculation began to play on Mrs Simpson's future and the king's intentions in the columns of American newspapers. Did he mean to marry her? Would a girl from Baltimore be Queen of England? One Southern lady had

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already reached the House of Commons before any English-woman; would another reach the throne? It was an appetising theme for journalists, and they made the most of it in the happy certainty that an Anglo-American romance in royal circles is at once more original than Hollywood and more aristocratic than Park Avenue. Their exuberance inspired a carnival of comment which some British readers in the United States appeared to find disturbing; and these students of the press sat down and wrote to the prime minister, expressing their uneasiness at what they read. The same intelligence had penetrated Canada, since the Dominion largely subsists on periodicals from the United States; and it was hardly to be expected that strict loyalists would welcome a situation which inspired American irreverence about the throne and seemed to indicate a grave departure from the exigencies of Imperial Preference. So more letters went to Mr Baldwin from Canadians and lay waiting for him on his desk at Downing Street when he returned to work after the holidays.

What was to be done? It was the middle of October now, and time's healing power had conspicuously failed to solve his problem. He knew that the divorce proceedings would be coming on in a week or so; he knew that tongues were wagging in America; and he felt—for the first time apparently—that "possibly a difficult situation might arise later." In that case, especially if he was to satisfy his correspondents, it might be just as well if somebody said something to the king. Was Sir Samuel Hoare prepared to mention it to him at Sandringham, where he would be going down to shoot? But the task was delicate, and the prime minister was left with it himself. After he had been back at work a week, he telephoned one Sunday asking for an audience upon an urgent matter and offering to go to Sandringham. But he suggested that there would be less danger of undesirable publicity if the king came

Fort Belvedere

back to Fort Belvedere, as Mr Baldwin was staying somewhere in the neighbourhood and could drive over unobtrusively. The date was fixed for the next Tuesday morning; and the prime minister prepared to raise the formidable topic. For the eleventh hour had struck some time before, and Mr Baldwin sprang into action.

3

They met soon after breakfast on October 20 at the king's small castellated country house in Windsor Park; and though Mr Baldwin nerved himself to broach the subject, he did not succeed in getting very far. He opened in an anxious vein upon "the criticism that at that time was proceeding in the American Press, the effect it would have in the Dominions, and particularly in Canada, where it was widespread, the effect it would have in this country." That brought him to his second topic—the unique nature of the monarchy and "the importance of its integrity," which in Mr Baldwin's view depended "on the respect that has grown up in the last three generations for the Monarchy." (This noble legacy was traced to the three reigns of Queen Victoria, King Edward VII and King George V; and the more questionable contribution of the first four Georges was legitimately overlooked.) But if the monarchy was criticised, he felt that it might very quickly lose its power beyond all chance of recovery.

After these instructive generalities he spoke of the divorce case and warned the king "that if a verdict was given in that case that left the matter in suspense for some time, that period of suspense might be dangerous, because then everyone would be talking, and when once the Press began, as it must begin some time in this country, a most difficult situation would arise for me"—that is, for Mr Baldwin—"for him, and there might well be a danger . . . that

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there might be sides taken and factions grow up in this country in a matter where no faction ought ever to exist." In order to avert this possibility Mr Baldwin suggested that the king should put pressure upon Mrs Simpson to withdraw her case, eliciting the answer that he never interfered in the matrimonial affairs of any of his subjects. Indeed, it would be easy to imagine the destructive comment that such a step might well occasion at this stage; and the prime minister admitted that it would be damaging. His sovereign insisted that it seemed unfair for Mrs Simpson to be denied her legal rights because she had the misfortune to be a friend of his.

Their talk, which lasted for an hour, was inconclusive; and Mr Baldwin went away, "glad that the ice had been broken." Once more, it seemed, the matter was to take its course. Before they parted, he informed the king that he pressed him for no kind of answer, although he begged him to consider all that he had said. But what precisely had he said?

III

Victoria Station

THE CONTINENTAL BOAT TRAIN drew slowly into the half-light of the big station, and one of its Pullmans came to a halt opposite the group of waiting pressmen. Along with someone from the Foreign Office and a few people from the German Embassy they had come to meet the new ambassador; and after a brisk exchange of compliments and flowers they were gratified with the spectacle of his lady smiling over a bouquet and, bareheaded in the carriage door, Herr von Ribbentrop himself. He was in plain clothes, since German ingenuity had not yet devised for its diplomatists that awe-inspiring uniform with its suggestion, halfway between land and sea, of a commissionaire outside a seagoing cinema. But this sartorial *Schrecklichkeit* was still some years away; and the simplicity of an earlier age demanded no more than a modest emblem somewhere in a buttonhole. He stood there in the carriage door, an unpretending figure in a light overcoat, and wore a pleasant smile upon that open countenance which was scarcely marred by a slight obliquity of vision.

Herr von Ribbentrop had not been in any hurry to take up his post in London. Indeed, his government had taken a considerable time to fill it after his predecessor's death in April. For it was August before he was nomi-

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nated; and he felt unable to proceed to London before the fourth week of October. Nor was its novel interest sufficient to prevent him from returning to Berlin a few weeks later in order to subscribe his name to a German-Japanese agreement for collaboration against the menace of the Communist International. Indeed, it was not altogether clear how far his interests were still attached to the personal Bureau for International Political Affairs which he had constructed at Berlin in the headquarters of the Nazi party. It seemed to duplicate the Foreign Office and might, if Herr von Ribbentrop prevailed in the strange dyarchy of German politics, supplant it. His introduction to diplomacy had taken place a few months earlier, when he appeared in London as his country's representative in the feverish discussions following the reoccupation of the Rhineland; and on that occasion his role was mainly negative. But in the interval he had employed himself in cultivating the society of influential Englishmen with a view to the promotion of Anglo-German understanding on the basis, it may be supposed, of opposition to the Russian Communists and their allies, the French. This task was admirably suited to his social aptitude, supported by his wife's considerable fortune; and the charm with which Joachim von Ribbentrop had once procured orders for champagne-French vintages, no less than the more formidable product of his German father-in-law—was now devoted to a higher purpose.

British chivalry is often morbidly affected by a taste for fraternising with its former enemies; and Herr von Ribbentrop's society was garnished with a pleasant flavour of old battles gallantly forgotten. There was a romantic history of his concealment in the bunkers of a Dutch steamer on his return from Canada to fight for Germany in 1914, which was no less flattering to his ingenuity than to the British blockade; and his subsequent recourse to

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commerce in a gentlemanly form was felt to be not unworthy of a Prussian officer who had seen better days. Besides, it was redeemed by his ensuing affluence; and no German emissary was better qualified for winning English hearts at certain levels of society, like those Renaissance diplomats who were sent into England by foreign governments "to 'practice' among the lords."

With such credentials he returned to London. His zeal could not be doubted, and it ran in the direction of an alignment of anti-Communist enthusiasts in all parts of the world. Herr Hitler had announced the theme with formidable vehemence before the Nazi party Congress at Nuremberg, where his hearers were regaled with hoarse denunciations of "a bestial, mad doctrine"; and a menacing forefinger skilfully directed their hopeful gaze towards the unlimited resources of Russia, which were still unhappily in Russian hands. "If the Urals with their incalculable wealth of raw materials, the rich forests of Siberia, and the unending cornfields of the Ukraine lay in Germany," the hungry prophet roared, "under National Socialist leadership the country would swim in plenty. We would produce, and every single German would have enough to live on." This was a rousing thought to supplement the purely spiritual basis of a disinterested anti-Communist crusade; and that enterprise might well determine a fresh alignment of the powers, a new Holy Alliance of modern autocrats against the demons of the Left.

The German attitude was plain; and it was reasonable to expect that Fascist Italy, politically organised with similar ideals and methods, might come to share it. Once an Allied Power, her Abyssinian experience had left Italy with a sense of grievance which withdrew her from the complacent company of her former Allies and aligned her with the European malcontents. The gamekeeper turned poacher with alarming gusto; and the first indication of a new

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rapprochement appeared that week in the shy presentation of a copy of *Mein Kampf* to Signor Mussolini's son-in-law and foreign minister, Count Ciano. Other paladins might even be enlisted in the same crusade; and, as Herr Hitler pointed out at Nuremberg, somebody would have to tell the English, "to break the unpleasant news to this Robinson Crusoe on his happy British island."

This was the unpleasing duty of Herr von Ribbentrop, and he discharged it manfully that afternoon in a London railway station. For after stating that "Germany wants to be friends with Great Britain" (since it would manifestly be most uncomfortable to go to war with Russia, if she were not), he informed the journalists that there was only one real danger threatening both Europe and the British Empire—the spread of Communism. He thoughtfully went on to indicate the vital need of close collaboration "in the common struggle for the upholding of our civilisation and our culture." But his revelation ended there, without disclosing that the threatened cultures, which Englishmen were called upon to save from sacrilegious hands, also comprised the Japanese. For that, perhaps, would hardly have been tactful; and if Herr von Ribbentrop was to succeed in his new character, he was going to require a great deal of tact.

IV

Buckingham Palace

HIS PROBLEM had been left to solve itself; but something must be settled soon, because events were moving. On the last Tuesday in October Mr Justice Hawke at Ipswich heard the cause of Simpson, W., v. Simpson, E. A., in a crowded court. There was no defence, and a decree nisi was pronounced on the wife's petition. These brief proceedings, which filled columns of American newspapers, were reported in the normal way for British readers, to most of whom they were without significance. *The Times*, indeed, did not report the case at all, but comforted its readers with the news that an Academician was engaged upon a portrait of the king in the uniform of the Seaforth Highlanders, of which *The Times* hoped with becoming loyalty to publish a reproduction before the end of 1936. But the news signified that Mrs Simpson would be free to marry when the decree was made absolute next year; and something would have to be decided soon.

Meanwhile, there was his work to do—appointments to be kept, drafts approved, audiences granted, all the royal round of interviews and paperwork. That week, indeed, he had one duty to perform which interested him more than usual. For official London was busy entertaining a distinguished Argentine who had come to Europe in order to

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preside over the League Assembly; and Anglo-Argentine relations were one of the king's specialties. Foremost, indeed, among the services he rendered to his fellow countrymen was that he made large numbers of them aware for the first time of the significance of South America in the modern world. Viewed hitherto as a romantic field for naturalists and prospectors, he brought it appreciably nearer to them in the practical form of a continent devoted to production and associated in a peculiar degree with British enterprise, a friendly continent where people seemed to entertain a surprising prejudice (almost unknown in other continents) in favour of the English and to recognise a sort of local royalty consisting of the Prince of Wales.

His visits had left practical results in the form of contracts and trade agreements; and he was always ready to renew contact with his South American acquaintances. For South America had been his first conquest outside British territory, and officials concerned with Anglo-Argentine affairs had come to know that they could always count upon the king to lend a hand. The Trade Agreement of 1933 owed something to his friendly presence. For negotiation was not unassisted by a royal host who had already met the visiting negotiators in their own country and could talk beef and pesos like an Anglo-Argentine. And now negotiations were proceeding for a fresh agreement. So it was not surprising that the king's interest in Argentina reappeared when Dr Saavedra Lamas, fresh from his diplomatic triumphs in adjusting the long Chaco war between Bolivia and Paraguay, found himself in London. The foreign minister of Argentina had already played a most distinguished part in South American affairs that earned him the Nobel Peace Prize. He had just left Geneva after presiding in the League Assembly, and he was on his way to Buenos Aires, where he was

Buckingham Palace

to take the chair at an Inter-American Peace Conference which was to be attended by President Roosevelt. Besides, a new agreement with Great Britain was under discussion; and the king, who always enjoyed meeting visitors from Argentina, entertained Dr Lamas on the last Friday in October at the first official dinner of his reign.

He had just moved into the palace from York House after the holidays; and his guests—two ministers, two Argentines, an ex-ambassador, three bankers, a permanent official, two businessmen, two members of the household and one other person—assembled on that Friday evening in such decorations as (with two exceptions) they were able to command. The great quadrangle of the palace seemed very large and still and empty after the movement of the lighted streets behind them; and as they passed into the illuminated hush of the great building, one of them at least was seriously intimidated by the uncanny spectacle of a few hats and overcoats, belonging to the guests who were already there, laid like a meagre offering upon the table standing in the immensity of the Grand Hall, an island in a sea of marble. For palaces, designed for the convenient reception of multitudes, present vast spaces that are apt to be a trifle overwhelming upon less populous occasions. Nor was confidence increased, as he passed up the staircase, by the presentation of a printed table plan from which he gathered that he was to sit opposite the guest of honour on the king's right.

Upstairs a dozen men were talking in a drawing room where the combined efforts of five generations of royal connoisseurs had assembled one of those accumulations of expensive chinoiserie, ornamental furniture of the best period and valuable pictures which delight collectors but strike ordinary eyes as rather restless. They ranged themselves a little awkwardly about the room and made uneasy conversation until their host appeared. That was

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the most reassuring sight they had encountered since entering the great building full of silent staircases and scarlet liveries and official portraits. For somebody they knew, smiling above the Garter ribbon, was moving round the little circle with a modest intimation that it was so good of them to come. Then they went in to dinner.

A band was playing somewhere; and the king sat between two Argentines, talking away to them in Spanish. Courses came and went; and one of the guests noticed that the palace was in a transitional phase, as the glasses still bore the royal cypher of the last reign, while the table linen must have come over from York House, since it was marked "E.P." Towards the end of dinner a kilted piper came marching through the open door and played vehemently round the room behind them; and as the swinging kilts kept time to the Highland march, a cheerful host informed the guest of honour that he had composed the piece himself. That had been two years before when the prince, a persevering player of unlikely instruments, achieved a novel combination on the bagpipes and entitled the result "Mallorca." His piper was just playing this oddly named addition to Highland melody round the dinner table as the king turned to Dr Lamas saying, "*Mi composición.*" A guest across the table, asked how he liked the bagpipes, answered irreverently that he would have to, because he would soon be writing regimental history for the Gordon Highlanders. Then they all stood up and passed into another room.

The evening had opened as a rather nervous ceremonial. But by the end of dinner it turned into an enjoyable men's party. The change, they felt, had been their host's contribution to the entertainment. For that cheerful presence in the blue ribbon overcame the majesty of their surroundings in which, perfectly at home himself, he made them feel at home as well. So they stood about in the next

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room and argued briskly about the news from Spain. But the evening was not all for pleasure, since there was business to be done. The king was sitting with his guest from Argentina and signalled one or two of them in turn to join the little group. There was a long session with the governor of the Bank of England, since a trade agreement was in progress and there were questions of exchange, on which the bank's opinions might be helpful to their guest. (Five days later, as the strange miasma of depreciation spread, one of the guests was asked by a director of the Bank of England whether the king's mental balance was quite satisfactory and, remembering that after-dinner talk, replied with perfect gravity that he feared the worst, since no one in his senses would have sat talking to the governor of the bank about exchange.) In the big drawing room their host marshalled his little party and brought each of them to bear upon the chief guest until the time arrived for them to make another move.

This time it was the Picture Gallery; and as the king paced up and down with one or two of them among the Cuyps and Rembrandts, they stood against Boulle cabinets and talked or stared aimlessly at pictures framed in heavy gilt on walls of green brocade. It had been a pleasant evening, since diplomatic conversation (and the added anguish of a foreign language) had not been required of any one of them for more than a few minutes. But the king's effort was more arduous, as the whole burden of the entertainment rested on a host. There was no hostess to relieve him, and he had managed the entire occasion effortlessly and with admirable effect. It could scarcely be pretended that it was one of undiluted gaiety for him. True, he always seemed to enjoy talking Spanish (although the private struggles of determined linguists are undisclosed to any but themselves), and it was an opportunity for exercising that accomplishment. But the company,

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though it contained lively ingredients, was composed for use rather than for pleasure. It was, in fact, a party with a purpose. For he was unlikely to invite the foreign secretary, the president of the Board of Trade, and the governor of the Bank of England to dine out of frivolity. The king was always practical—and the trade agreement was signed a month later. But though such parties may be successful, their success is only purchased by unremitting effort on a host's part. No effort was apparent, but the king had done his evening's work. He was still talking in the Picture Gallery, until a final round of the little circle brought him to the door and they saw the last of him—it was for some of them, although they did not know it yet, the last sight of him—a blue ribbon and a bright head in the big doorway between the marble pillars.

The king had gone; and they were left to find their way down silent staircases into the hushed region of illuminated corridors and scarlet liveries and the great entrance hall. The palace quadrangle was large and empty as they drove away. But once across the open spaces of the forecourt and through the tall railings, they were back in the light and movement of the London streets once more. Behind them, in the darkened galleries of the great building, a dim vista opened upon silent furniture and the vague gleam of porcelain. Room after room, unmovingly reflected in still mirrors, stood empty among seas of lacquer, quantities of Sèvres, acres of painted canvas. Stairs climbed silently from marble halls past empty balustrades to empty landings; forests of candelabra rose to meet unlighted chandeliers that hung from darkened ceilings; three hundred clocks ticked the long autumn night away; and somewhere in the hush of the great building its master faced his problem.

NOVEMBER

London-Portland-Rhondda-London

IT WAS AT THE END of the third week in October that Mr Baldwin had come to see the king in order to inform him that there was evidence that he was being criticised and that criticism might be practically fatal to the monarchy. It was just possible that the prime minister was overanxious, since the House of Hanover had shown amazing powers of survival in face of sustained and occasionally brutal criticism. Queen Victoria herself outlived a vigorous and highly disrespectful outbreak of republican opinion, and at one time her son was handled with a measure of irreverence comparable to the tone of Regency lampoons. But Mr Baldwin was more cautious, although he hardly ventured to suggest how criticism was to be avoided in the present instance. Apart from that, he had not said very much except to offer a suggestion of doubtful value that the king should use his influence with Mrs Simpson to secure the discontinuance of her divorce proceedings and, consequently, her continuance indefinitely as the wife of Mr Ernest Simpson. This line of action, with its hint of subterfuge, did not commend itself; and, in any case, the prime minister's suggestion was quite academic now, because the case was over. It had been duly heard a week after Mr Baldwin raised the matter,

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and the Court granted a decree nisi in Mrs Simpson's favour. But though the public danger of which he had warned the king must still exist—perhaps in even greater measure than before—Mr Baldwin made no further move.

The autumn weeks went by. A fortnight after their indecisive conversation the king opened Parliament in the first week of November. It was raining hard; and he had waited to the last moment before substituting a swift run in a closed automobile for the slow drive along the mall in a gold coach jolting at a walking pace behind led horses and between the marching files of his body-guard. But if the rain would not leave off there was no point in getting everybody drenched, although his sense of ceremonial was disappointed by the inevitable change. At the House of Lords he made his declaration of Protestant belief and sat in naval uniform to speak the words of the king's speech—a solitary figure on a single throne, whose lonely eminence had moved Mr Baldwin a few months earlier to guess at the appalling solitude of a king without a wife, "alone in his awful task with no voice by him to cheer, to comfort, and to encourage."

A week later, in the dusk of a November day, he stepped out of the palace dressed like any of his subjects and drove to Westminster. It was the chilly eve of Armistice Day, when the survivors set little wooden crosses for their dead in a miniature field of remembrance beneath the shadow of the abbey; and the king had come to plant a cross in honour of his father. No one knew that he was coming; no one, indeed, knew that he was there, until somebody looked round and found the king beside him with the big collar of his coat turned up. (This time there were no ministerial protests at his informality.) That had been his private celebration of the Armistice, due pendant of his final vigil with his brothers at the four

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corners of his father's catafalque in the great hall at Westminster nine months before. For that had been his own idea as well. (The king's strong sense of reality could apprehend the deep significance of ceremony, when it had a meaning.) On the next morning he was at the Cenotaph with his mother leaning on his arm and the home secretary's smile behind him for the official celebration of the Armistice; and at night the British Legion saw him in his usual place at the Albert Hall. They sang the old songs—"Pack up Your Troubles" as the standards filed into the hall, and "Tipperary" as the badges of the old divisions came in sight, and then the whole, full-throated repertory of the war: the slow lift of "The Long, Long Trail," the pert derision of "Who's Your Lady Friend?" the burlesque yearning of "If You Were the Only Boy in the World," the cheerful quickstep of "Take Me Back to Dear Old Blighty" (to which a British army had once marched irreverently into Constantinople), and the slow, crowding memories of "Keep the Home Fires Burning." They sang them all that evening in the Albert Hall with a king to lead them in their singing; and before a million scarlet petals—one for each wasted life—came drifting slowly down out of the darkness overhead, they heard a king pronounce the faultless words of Laurence Binyon's elegy—

*They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.*

Some eccentricity denied to broadcast listeners the final thrill of hearing those words spoken to his ex-servicemen by a king who had served with them in the war. The programme of the B.B.C. was, it appeared, too crowded to include his contribution to the ceremony. But the king's programme was not too full for him to stay with them in the

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Albert Hall until the ceremony ended. Then he caught a midnight train for Portland.

At 4 A.M. on the next morning he was in the gusty darkness of a mid-November storm on the Dorset coast. But his inspection of the fleet—three battleships, an aircraft carrier, shore establishments and three cruisers in the first day—was faithfully performed. The winter rain was driving down on the grey ships; and, where possible, the king inspected the ships' companies under cover. But when that could not be done, he passed along the soaking ranks without a waterproof. That evening after dinner he was at a lower-deck concert in the great hangar of an aircraft carrier. No officers were present except his own staff, and the king made a little speech and led the singing. Then he returned to the milder entertainment of an officers' "at home"; and considerably after midnight he turned in on board the royal yacht with the prospect of another day of still more inspections.

That evening Mr Baldwin made a speech as well. For the debate on the address was taking an exceedingly unsatisfactory course. Opposition speakers insisted with gloomy iteration that the country had been left without adequate defences in face of frequent warnings. Mr Churchill, in particular, reminded ministers of their deficiencies with melancholy gusto; and it was felt necessary for Mr Baldwin to reply. He assured the House that the minister for co-ordination of defence, working with tact rather than with compulsory powers, was making admirable progress, that reports at monthly intervals were exhaustively reviewed and that there were interesting subjects of a vital character upon which it would be premature to say any more. Then he proceeded to the programme of rearmament and undertook to put his views before the House "with an appalling frankness." He and his colleagues had been worried, he confessed, since

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1933. But what were they to do? An unsuccessful by-election in a London suburb seemed to show that his countrymen thought otherwise; and "I asked myself what chance was there—when that feeling that was given expression to in Fulham was common throughout the country—what chance was there within the next year or two of that feeling being so changed that the country would give a mandate for rearmament? Supposing I had gone to the country and said that Germany was re-arming and that we must rearm, does anybody think that this pacific democracy would have rallied to that cry at that moment? I cannot think of anything that would have made the loss of the election from my point of view more certain." That was the essential thing, of course—to win the election; and the prime minister, continuing his narrative in this refreshing mood of candour, told the House how it had been done. "All I did was to take a moment perhaps less unfortunate than another might have been, and we won the election with a large majority; but frankly I could conceive that we should at that time, by advocating certain courses, have been a great deal less successful . . .," by advocating openly, that is to say, those courses of rearmament which it was proposed to follow if they succeeded in winning the election somehow. (It was unnecessary for him to remind the House that during the election he had told his countrymen that "I give you my word there will be no great armaments" and "There has not been, there is not, and there will not be any question of huge armaments or materially increased forces," because Mr Churchill had already been unkind enough to do so.) Then he passed on to his familiar eulogy upon democracy—"I shall always trust the instincts of our democratic people. They may come a little late, but my word, they come with a certainty when they do come; they come with a . . ." But Mr

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Baldwin, by his own remarkable admission, had not trusted them sufficiently to tell the nation of the danger in which it stood or of the steps requisite to save it. A more cautious strategy preferred to leave them in the dark until the general election was safely won and then, with a majority obtained for other purposes, to make up for lost time—if that were possible. It was a strange confession with which Mr Baldwin regaled the House of Commons at just about the same time as his sovereign was making his little speech to cheering seamen in the crowded hangar of HMS Courageous.

An element of caution now appeared in Mr Baldwin's dealings with the king. Nothing had passed between them on the vital subject since their inconclusive conversation at Fort Belvedere, in which the prime minister had not offered any definite advice and "pressed him for no kind of answer." No issue had been raised about which the king could find himself in disagreement with the Cabinet. The Cabinet, indeed, had not yet been informed that anything was in the air, though Mr Baldwin had reported his conversation with the king "to about four of my senior colleagues." But shortly after the king's evening at the Albert Hall a minister approached a high official of the British Legion with a discreet enquiry on behalf of the senior members of the Cabinet as to the Legion's attitude in the event of any disagreement with the king. True, they had not disagreed; but one could not be too careful, and it would be just as well to know how the ex-servicemen were likely to react.

It was a month since Mr Baldwin had approached the king, and his advisers gave no further sign. But time was getting on; and there were indications that delay might lead to casual and uninformed publicity of the character already rife in the United States upon a matter

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as to which the king had nothing to conceal. For he had taken his decision. Mrs Simpson would be free to marry when her decree nisi became absolute; and as he proposed to marry her, his course was plain. His choice was founded on a deep conviction that he had found the one partner in the world to share his arduous and solitary life. Her inspiration and support, he felt, were necessary if he was to do the work that lay in front of him; and if that were so and she was willing, there was no honest course except to marry her. He had always felt a deep contempt for loveless marriages, for those empty parodies of matrimony which might be tolerated by convention but entirely failed to satisfy his own sincerity. He saw quite enough of such pretences in society to view them with distaste, and his strong feeling for reality rejected these convenient arrangements. Indeed, the fact that they frequently passed muster without audible denunciation from the official guardians of morality rendered him a little sceptical of the sincerity of these authorities. He seemed to take a higher view of marriage, since he looked beyond its bare externals to a partnership of two people who were made for one another; and having found his partner, he resolved that they must marry.

That being so, he decided to inform the prime minister. There might be something to be said for letting matters drift, but that was not his way. Besides, he was to be crowned next summer; and the great ceremony meant far too much for him to contemplate performing such a ritual before a government and people whom he had omitted to inform that he intended to get married. For he could apprehend its deep significance, and he was quite incapable of such a subterfuge, however useful it might be. A more cunning man, perhaps, might have manœuvred; but a more cunning man would not have been the Prince of Wales they knew. So the king sent for Mr Baldwin

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who had been meaning, as he told the House of Commons, to call upon him later in the week himself.

The interview (it was their second meeting on this vital subject) took place on November 16 at the palace almost exactly a month after their first conversation. Mr Baldwin opened it by saying that he did not think the country would approve a marriage of the king and Mrs Simpson, since it would make her queen. He was quite positive in this opinion and urged that, although he might be old-fashioned, his worst enemy would not deny his talent for divining how the English people would react to anything. (Indeed, investigations on that very subject had already been initiated with the British Legion.) The prime minister went on to explain the difference between the king's wife and the wives of other Englishmen. That was the price of monarchy. She was, he pointed out, the queen; and since she was the country's queen, Mr Baldwin stated that in selecting her "the voice of the people must be heard." (It was not altogether plain how far there had been any consultation of the people in the choice of other royal consorts or what people ought to be consulted, since Mr Baldwin had gone no further yet than four of his own colleagues.) The king replied that he proposed to marry Mrs Simpson and that, if the difficulties were insuperable, he must go. For he was conscious that the loneliness of his position must be mitigated, if he was to bear the burden of his public task. Other men were not denied the happiness of married life; and he was quite convinced that he would be unable to perform his duty without it. If he was denied a home, he felt that he could hardly be of any further public use and, in that case, he had better go. His sense of royal duty was too high to tolerate a useless king, and if he was to be rendered useless, he preferred to leave the work for other hands. So he told Mr Baldwin that if

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the marriage was prevented, he would have to go. This information was received by the prime minister with an expression of regret and the guarded statement that he could make no further comment at the moment.

The matter rested there. The prime minister had told the king of his objections, and the king had stated his intention with a warning of the grave consequences that might follow. Indeed, he might have borrowed the plain words of a royal predecessor: "For your desire to see us married we thank you; your desire to dictate to us the consort whom we shall choose we consider somewhat superfluous: the English Parliament has not been wont to use such language to their sovereigns, and where private persons in such cases follow their private tastes, sovereigns may reasonably challenge an equal liberty. . . . We have heard much from you of the incommunities which may attend any marriage; we have not heard from you on the commodities thereof—one of which is of some weight with us, namely, of our private inclination." That night he told his mother and two of his three brothers (the third was out of town) what he proposed to do.

Was there a solution? It occurred to somebody that if he married Mrs Simpson without actually making her his queen, that might meet the case; and the suggestion was communicated to the prime minister. But in this anxious interval the king's business must be carried on. For he was due that week to make a tour in Wales. The long tragedy of unemployment had created special problems in those stricken regions which had once been termed with cruel accuracy "Depressed" and were now known to a more indulgent administrative terminology as "Special Areas." A visit by the king might, it was felt, assure the people of these unhappy regions that they were not forgotten; and on the morrow of his interview with Mr Baldwin he left, escorted by the ministers of health and

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labour, by a night train for South Wales. All day long he passed beneath the devastated Rhondda hillsides, among waving flags and cheering people, under pitiable little arches of farm produce and stacked Davy lamps. The king was all smiles and handshakes; but though he tried his best to give them a few cheering words, they saw his stricken look as he passed into the shadow of Dowlais. The great steel works were a silent ruin until the light Welsh voices of some bystanders on a slag heap lifted in a hymn. The packed streets of Merthyr saw him go by; and that night he went back to his train to sleep. On the next day he passed down the same avenue of devastation, through the little streets of Pontypool and past Blaenavon on its ledge, along the Monmouth valleys which had once sent angry miners into Newport to shoot at the queen's soldiers. But they were cheering now, although one disrespectful eye observed that a minister, uncertain of his welcome, seemed to keep close beside the king. His tour—it was the last of his innumerable tours—was over now; and on his return to London he telegraphed to “urge them not to lose heart and to rest assured that their troubles are not forgotten.”

His troubles still remained, and on November 25 he sent for the prime minister again. This time the king began the conversation by asking Mr Baldwin if he had been made aware of the suggestion that his wife should not be queen. “Yes,” said the prime minister. The king asked him what he thought of it, and Mr Baldwin said that he had not considered it. This was surprising, as the week before his sole objection to the marriage had been founded on the ground that “marriage would have involved the lady becoming Queen.” But the prime minister appeared reluctant to consider means by which the consequences that he feared might be avoided. As he had not considered the proposal, he informed the

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king that he could not give a considered opinion, but that if the king would like to have his first reaction quite informally, it was that Parliament would never pass the necessary legislation. This was unpromising, since Mr Baldwin was the leader of a large majority. But he added that if the king desired, he would examine the proposal formally. The king replied that this was his desire. The prime minister explained that this would mean putting the proposal formally before the whole Cabinet and communicating with the Dominion prime ministers and asked the king if that was what he wished. The king assented, and Mr Baldwin undertook to do so.

He was to invite the Cabinet's opinion and that of the Dominion prime ministers in a matter upon which his mind appeared to be made up. For he had indicated plainly to the king his disapproval of the marriage, whether the lady became queen or not; and that view, no doubt, prevailed within the narrow circle to which his consultations had been hitherto confined. But he had now assumed the duty of consultation with a wider circle, and it would be interesting to observe how far its elements confirmed his view. The Cabinet would doubtless give due weight to the opinions of its four leading members, who were already in Mr Baldwin's confidence; and it appeared from subsequent proceedings in the Federal House of Representatives at Canberra that one, at least, of the Dominion prime ministers was consulted (as the king had asked) on lines which rendered his dissent from Mr Baldwin's view improbable.

The king's request was made to Mr Baldwin on November 25; and three days later the formalities began. "On November 28th," as Mr Lyons told the Australian House of Representatives, "I received from the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom a personal and secret cable informing me that he had had conversations with

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his Majesty the King about Mrs Simpson, and that his Majesty had stated his intention of marrying Mrs Simpson, but that at the same time his Majesty had said that he appreciated that the idea of her becoming Queen and her children succeeding to the Throne was out of the question, and that consequently he contemplated abdication and leaving the Duke of York to succeed on the Throne. His Majesty had subsequently asked Mr Baldwin's views on a new proposal, namely, that special legislative provision should be made for a marriage to Mrs Simpson, which would not make her Queen and would not entitle her issue to succeed to the Throne. Mr Baldwin informed me that he had advised his Majesty that he did not think there was any chance of such an arrangement receiving the approval of Parliament in Great Britain, also that the assent of the Dominions would be essential to the carrying out of such an arrangement. He invited my personal view."

It was not difficult to guess how Mr Lyons would reply to a communication in such terms. Besides, he was an earnest Catholic, for whom divorce was consequently inadmissible and the remarriage of divorced persons, as permitted by the law of England, a scandalous proceeding. His answer intimated that "the proposed marriage, if it led to Mrs Simpson becoming Queen, would provoke widespread condemnation, and the alternative proposal, or something in the nature of a specially sanctioned morganatic marriage, would run counter to the best popular conception of the Royal Family." Reassured upon his attitude, Mr Baldwin now invited him to transmit officially the opinion of His Majesty's Government in the Commonwealth of Australia; and formal reference of the proposals proceeded, as he had told the king it should.

The problem, it would seem, was not to reach solution; and a wider audience had now to be convinced that this

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was right. The vast mass of King Edward's subjects was completely unaware that any problem of the sort existed. A minority indulged in speculation founded on vague gossip; and individuals were occasionally startled by a tendency among their betters to speak more freely of the king than had been customary. "*C'est dans les hauts rangs de la société,*" as a disillusioned emperor had once observed, "*que se trouvent les traîtres.*" But England went about its business that month in ignorance of the whole subject, of the cruel problem which had been left to solve itself and had conspicuously failed to do so. The time was coming for England to be told; and if Mr Baldwin had been a little slow in dealing with the king, he was anything but slow in dealing with the people.

DECEMBER

I

Buenos Aires

ON THE FIRST DAY of the month a big two-funneled cruiser lay in the North Basin flying the Stars and Stripes; and the President of the United States was in the city. They had come up the river Plate the day before; and though battleships are more adapted for the conveyance of presidents, they draw more water than that yellow estuary affords for ocean shipping on the way to Buenos Aires. So the President, who was not averse from travelling in a cruiser—his holidays were nearly always maritime—arrived on the USS Indianapolis and was now addressing the assembled dignitaries of the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace at the height of an Argentine midsummer. His voice had all the old assurance, his eyeglasses the same compelling gleam. For Franklin D. Roosevelt was still President of the United States. He had disposed of Mr Landon by a comfortable eleven million votes and carried every state of the Union except Vermont and Maine. That was just a month ago; and dazed Republicans were still explaining that this shattering defiance of all expectations (as well as eighty-five per cent of the newspaper press of the United States) was due to Mr Landon's personal defects, to the unscrupulous employment of administration patronage, to

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the Negro vote—to anything, in fact, except the obvious conclusion that the United States wished a continuance of the New Deal.

Almost his first official act after re-election was to announce that he would attend the conference at Buenos Aires; and radio listeners were promptly gratified with a pronouncement that had a wider range than usual. For this time the fireside of his chat extended from the Great Lakes to Cape Horn, and residents in twenty-one American republics were invited to perfect their democratic collaboration in order to “give renewed hope and courage to the war-weary peoples of the world by demonstrating to them that the scourge of armed conflict can and will be eliminated from the Western Hemisphere.” That was to be the purpose of the Inter-American Conference for the Maintenance of Peace.

Here was something more than a routine performance of the exercises normal at Pan-American conferences, of which a disrespectful European critic had once written that “perorations swoop from pole to pole with one eye on the future of mankind and one, more watchful, on the State Department.” For the Pan-American ideal had made comparatively slight progress so long as it appeared to watchful South Americans as little more than a polite synonym for the predominance of the United States. Their neighbours, Mexico and Colombia, had had uncomfortable experience of North American expansion, when it was still in course of adding Texas, California, New Mexico, Utah, Arizona and the Panama Canal to the United States by methods which in the Old World were ascribed to imperialism, in the New to manifest destiny; and while the Union was growing, South Americans (at whose expense it seemed to grow) were more inclined to think of the *peligro Yanqui* than of Secretary Blaine’s generous inauguration of a Pan-American conference. The theme was lofty

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and the speakers often of unusual eloquence. But so long as United States Marines made sudden landings on the territory of other American republics, the proceedings of successive conferences had little meaning.

But when Mr Roosevelt went to the White House, his first inaugural announced a change. "I would dedicate this nation," he had said in 1933, "to the policy of the good neighbour—the neighbour who resolutely respects himself and, because he does so, respects the rights of others—the neighbour who respects his obligations and respects the sanctity of his agreements" (this platitude of 1933 would ring like a challenge in the altered world of 1939) "in and with a world of neighbours. . . . We now realize, as we have never realized before, our interdependence on each other; that we cannot merely take, but we must give as well." This was a new tone for Washington to take with Ibero-America; and his policies conformed to it. Secretary Hull assured a conference in Uruguay that "no Government need fear any intervention on the part of the United States under the Roosevelt Administration." Not that the President was disposed to leave the sister nations of the Americas alone. On the contrary, his purpose was to accelerate the tempo of their collaboration in order to present the noble spectacle of a continent at peace to the Old World, which seemed increasingly to hang upon the edge of war.

That had been his plain objective in inviting them to confer upon the maintenance of peace. He had already said something of his purpose on his way south at Rio, where he pressed his hearers to "present a record which our Hemisphere may give to the world as convincing proof that peace lies always at hand when Nations, serene in their sovereign security, meet their current problems with understanding and good-will." It was his central theme at Buenos Aires—"In this Western Hemisphere the night of fear has been dispelled. . . ." Not so in the Old World,

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where a new age of fear was just beginning. "Can we, the Republics of the New World, help the Old World to avert the catastrophe which impends?" Peace, social justice and expanding commerce could, he felt, empower them to show the path by which a distracted world might find its way back to a sane order. "Our Hemisphere has at last come of age. We are here assembled to show its unity to the world. We took from our ancestors a great dream. We here offer it back as a great unified reality." That was the message which he sent from Buenos Aires to Madrid, to London, Paris, Rome and Berlin; and thus, in Mr Roosevelt's variation on a theme of Mr Canning's, the New World might yet redress the balance of the Old.

II

London

ON THE MORNING of Wednesday, December 2, the British public was quite unaware of any problem by which King Edward's future was affected. A restricted audience at the Bradford Diocesan Conference the afternoon before had heard the bishop, in the course of an address devoted to the coronation service, affirm the monarch's need of divine grace and add the "hope that he is aware of this need. Some of us wish that he gave more positive signs of his awareness." This was a plain comment on the lack of any public evidence upon the subject of the king's churchgoing; and the bishop's use of a diocesan occasion for alluding to it was a modest reproduction of the historic utterances of those outspoken clerics, by whom sovereigns had often been confronted from "the pulpit" (in Gibbon's phrase), "that safe and sacred organ of sedition." But several provincial newspapers applied it with a strange unanimity to the king's conduct in general; and breakfast tables in Leeds, Bradford, Darlington, Nottingham and Birmingham were regaled that morning with editorial homilies alluding gravely to dark rumours and the king's responsibilities. These comments were reproduced the same afternoon in London. But nobody was told what it was all about; and on Wednes-

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day, December 2, the British public was completely unaware that there was any issue by which the future of the king might be affected.

That evening he sent for the prime minister again in order to discuss the matter for the fourth time. It was a week since he had asked Mr Baldwin to invite the Cabinet and the Dominion prime ministers to consider a solution of the problem under which his wife should not be queen. The king asked if he could give an answer; and Mr Baldwin said he was afraid it was impracticable, because the Cabinet advised that there was no prospect of the necessary legislation being passed and his enquiries of the Dominions appeared, though incomplete, to show the same. The king accepted this reply unquestioningly and bore himself, in Mr Baldwin's recollection, "as a great gentleman." Then the prime minister explained that only two alternatives remained—"either complete abandonment of the project on which his heart was set, and remaining as King, or doing as he intimated to me that he was prepared to do, in the talk which I have reported, going, and later on contracting that marriage, if it were possible"—and left the king to choose between the throne without a wife or a wife without the throne.

On the same evening (it was still Wednesday, December 2) the prime minister conferred with the Opposition leaders; and London editors were facing the uneasy problem of explaining to their readers what it was all about.

On the morning of Thursday, December 3, the British public was informed for the first time that there was something going on. The sole fact disclosed was that the prime minister had seen the king. But this was enlarged upon by editorial comment, which varied in each newspaper according to its station—*The Times* alluding with hauteur to transatlantic gossip, to its serious effects in

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Canada and to the pressing need for a denial; the *Daily Telegraph* referring to some choice which the king was believed to be about to make; the *Daily Herald* reflecting the Opposition leader's respect for the Constitution; and the *News-Chronicle* suggesting explicitly that the king should marry the lady of his choice with some lower rank than that of queen. The evening papers were more personal, as might have been expected. Press photographs of Mrs Simpson, which editorial discretion had excluded earlier, were freely published; and all that day the London streets were sibilant with Mrs Simpson's name.

That afternoon official reticence was still maintained in Parliament, where Mr Baldwin stated that "while there does not at present exist any constitutional difficulty, the situation is of such a nature as to make it inexpedient that I should be questioned about it at this stage." But when Mr Churchill asked for an assurance that no irrevocable step would be taken before a formal statement had been made to Parliament, the prime minister refrained from giving it. He saw the king again that evening, and it was plain that the position was unchanged. The king went across to dine with his mother, his sister and the Duke and Duchess of York and left no doubt of his decision. Late that evening he left the palace for Fort Belvedere, resolved that there must be no more distressing interviews with his relations. Besides, as Mr Baldwin told the House of Commons afterwards, he had determined "that if he went, he would go with dignity . . . with as little disturbance of his Ministers and his people as possible. He wished to go in circumstances that would make the succession of his brother as little difficult as possible; and I may say that any idea to him of what might be called a King's party was abhorrent. He stayed down at Fort Belvedere because he said he was not coming to London while these things were in dispute, because of the cheering crowds. . . ." That night a crowded meeting

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at the Albert Hall, called for quite another purpose in the normal course of politics, had heard a voice shout "Long live the King" and cheered him to the echo. But he was out of hearing now; and late that night his car rolled into the dark grounds of Fort Belvedere.

III

Fort Belvedere

IT WAS FRIDAY, December 4, and the British public had been aware for precisely forty-eight hours that complications had arisen because the king desired to marry somebody of whom the vast majority of them had heard for rather less than that period. *The Times* informed them bluntly that there were no objections on the ground that the contemplated marriage was "with a 'commoner' or with an American. . . . The one objection, and it is an overwhelming objection, to the marriage which His Majesty is believed to have projected is that the lady in question has already two former husbands living, from whom in succession she has obtained a divorce, on the last occasion at a recent date and in circumstances which are matters of fairly common knowledge" (though scarcely among readers of *The Times*, since it had not reported the divorce proceedings). The article continued with a statement that the marriage "would scandalise a very large proportion of the nation and Empire" and dismissed as "speculative, if well-intentioned, notions" the possibility of legislation conferring on the king's wife any status below that of queen. Less positive, the *Daily Telegraph* enquired "what is the voice of the great silent multitude of the British people at home and overseas?"

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That was a little difficult to ascertain. For no one in authority had told them plainly what, if anything, was in dispute. Yet it was becoming evident that there was a dispute of some kind; and one educated Londoner began to grow uneasy. Writing a newspaper article that morning, he insisted that "if some formalism or the social prejudices of a narrow circle stand between the people and their King his subjects have the right to know it." They had not been told so yet. For they had no official information apart from Mr Baldwin's statement in the House of Commons that there was no constitutional difficulty, although the situation rendered it inexpedient that he should answer questions. This vagueness was disturbing; and the writer, with a strong conviction of the king's usefulness, asserted that, if his countrymen were forced to choose, "we could bear with fortitude the lapse of almost any public man into that aged ecstasy of memoir-writing that is the final consolation of their declining years, since there is hardly one of them whose age now promises a protracted spell of public usefulness or whose experience has accumulated in a long lifetime a tithe of the knowledge and sympathy which have formed the swift harvest of the greatest public servant of them all." But had they got to choose? Nobody had said so yet. All that was needed at this stage, if it was desired to ascertain the public mind, was some authoritative indication of what was really in dispute. "This business," as the writer of the article went on, "is far too vital for any of us to permit it to be transacted behind locked doors or to be satisfied with the empty bulletins of counsellors whose lips are sealed. That treatment has not yielded such good results in other matters of deep moment that it can be tolerated in this primary concern of the whole English-speaking world. . . ." But Parliament was sitting; and, no doubt, they would be told what it was all about.

When the House met on that Friday morning, Mr

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Baldwin had nothing more to say, although he still refrained from giving Mr Churchill his assurance that nothing irrevocable would be done before a statement in the House. But in the afternoon he stated that the king was free to marry without anyone's consent and that his wife automatically became queen with "all the status, rights and privileges which, both by positive law and by custom, attach to that position, and with which we are familiar in the cases of Her Late Majesty Queen Alexandra and of Her Majesty Queen Mary, and her children would be in the direct line of succession to the Throne." He added that this situation could only be avoided by legislation and that "His Majesty's Government are not prepared to introduce such legislation." The change, moreover, would require assent by the Dominions; and Mr Baldwin told the House that he was satisfied from his enquiries that this would not be forthcoming. He did not state that the king's position was involved, and the only question appeared to be whether Mrs Simpson should be queen.

That was the simple question which the public mind had now to answer without knowing that, if they answered it in one way, they would lose the king. Its deliberations were assisted by a request from the Archbishop of Canterbury that the clergy of the Church of England should refrain from preaching on the question "with imperfect knowledge of an extremely difficult situation" on the ground that "silence is fitting until the ultimate decisions are made known," and that prayers should be offered in all churches.

On Friday evening Mr Baldwin drove to Fort Belvedere and saw the king again. He raised no objection to the king's request that he might see Mr Churchill as an old friend. For he was rather lonely at the fort. He had his home around him and the garden he had made. But there was so much to think about and not many people to

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advise him. He scarcely liked to leave the house for a breath of air in his own garden in case he missed the telephone; and the light was always burning late in the window of the room where he sat working.

On Saturday, December 5, the public mind began to face the question whether Mrs Simpson should be queen. For the prime minister had told them that there was no other way; and *The Times*, at least, prepared them for the consequences by a helpful explanation of "what abdication means." Manufacturers of coronation souvenirs began to give expression to their fears; and newspaper readers learned that people had been shouting "We want Edward," and even "God save the King from Baldwin," in the London streets. The chairman of the Trades Union Congress announced with unimpeachable veracity that "the Government of the country must be by and through Parliament, and it is this great institution that enables us to govern ourselves with the consent and will of the people. It must be preserved at all costs." But there was evidently some confusion, since no one had suggested hitherto that Parliament was challenged. Parliament, indeed, had not yet been consulted. For the prime minister had merely told it that his Cabinet did not propose to introduce a bill varying the rank of the king's wife; and in consequence the only question that remained was whether Mrs Simpson should be queen.

Mr Baldwin had once told the king about his talent for divining how England would react to anything. But what did Mr Baldwin mean by England? His survey of the country ranged wider than the narrow area irreverently summarised by Mr H. G. Wells as "the Bishops and the Court people and the Foreign Office and the Old Gentry and Bath and Cheltenham and Blimland and all that." Their view of such a question was a certainty.

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But England amounted to a good deal more than their restricted territory. Any competent election agent knew that; and it was an election agent's knowledge that was needed now, if anybody was to estimate how England would react. England consisted, for political purposes, of the constituencies; and Mr Baldwin knew as well as anyone how they were likely to react, since he had devoted his intelligence for years to estimating the impact of ideas and policies on the constituencies. What did they consist of? A group of local politicians, belonging (unlike the vast majority of their fellow countrymen) to one of the three parties, was organised in political associations, by which elections were conducted. These worthies, lay and clerical, formed a political elite by which the work of politics was done. They canvassed, organised bazaars, attended meetings, sat on platforms and constituted almost the sole means of contact between a member and the mass of voters whom he represented. They were, in fine, the middlemen of politics, through whom he sought to influence or to interpret the opinions of a vast intangible democracy. Those were rarely ascertainable till polling day, when they were often a complete surprise. But candidates and members had no difficulty in finding out how their associations felt; and if they were asked what a constituency thought, their answer naturally bore a close relation to the local views of organised opinion, although numerically this was little more than a fraction of the whole mass of voters. But it possessed the virtue of being readily accessible; and this political elite was often counted on to indicate the views of an entire locality. When people talked about "the country" and how much "the country" was prepared to stand, this was what they meant. For organised opinion—consisting of a group of local worthies organised in churches, chapels and political associations—was almost all that anyone could ascertain without a general election.

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How was it likely to react to the king's problem? The nation had once been ably diagnosed by an experienced observer in the year following the war: "We are a commercial people with a nonconformist conscience. This is an outstanding factor that never should be overlooked. *The Times* is a very old institution—like beer and cricket and public schools. It will survive—in spite of Northcliffe, and in spite of the Celtic fires launched by our little Prime Minister." It was 1919 when Lord Esher wrote; and since that date the age of Mr Lloyd George had been succeeded by the age of Mr Baldwin, in which Lord Esher's diagnosis seemed to ring more true than ever. A commercial people with a nonconformist conscience, asked suddenly to solve an awkward social problem, would scarcely err upon the side of laxity. But if it was to give a proper answer, it must have a little time. For a profound admirer of the English, who wrote *The Forsyte Saga*, had written that "You always have to give England time. She realises things slowly." That was undeniable. Had not Mr Baldwin said more than once that democracies take two years longer to make up their minds than autocrats? That week end a democracy was faced with an absorbing problem. Was time to be conceded?

A note of haste began to creep into the discussion, *The Times* announcing "a widespread desire . . . that this profoundly disturbing difficulty should be rapidly settled" and the *Daily Telegraph* insisting on the "danger of delayed decision." It was not altogether easy to see what the danger was—apart from the unfavourable effect of public cares on Christmas shopping—since the main requirement of grave problems is a right, rather than a precipitate, decision. This need was felt by Mr Churchill, who now issued a reasoned plea "for time and patience," arguing that Parliament had not yet been consulted and that the government had no right to advise the king to abdicate. He indicated that the king had been confronted

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with an ultimatum and begged for "time and tolerance." But there was not much sign that this view found favour, when Mr Baldwin visited the king that afternoon and seemed to be inclined towards a solution under which the king should abdicate at once.

Yet time was what he needed, if his people were to understand his purpose. For he wished to speak to them again, to tell them what was in his mind and then to leave them to decide. This time he would have talked to them as friends, reminded them that he was still the man they used to know as Prince of Wales, the man whose motto was "I serve." He would have told them that he could not bear his heavy burden without a happy married life and that he was resolved to marry the woman he loved as soon as she was free. They knew him, he was sure they knew him well enough to know that he could never contemplate a marriage of convenience. They would hear from him that he had waited a long time to make his choice and that he had been a very lonely man without it. They would understand all that a home would mean to him in the way of sympathy and understanding and companionship, as it did to so many of his hearers; and they would surely wish him the same happiness. It was his purpose to inform them that the lady whom he hoped to make his wife had no wish to become queen and would assume such rank as might be fitting. He would leave the matter there and go away for a short time, until they had reflected on it. Then, he hoped, he might return; if not, they would have chosen with full knowledge. But the Cabinet advised that such a broadcast to his subjects was constitutionally impossible, because a king could only speak as his ministers advised. The king submitted; and the question was left unasked.

On Sunday, December 6, the public mind was slowly

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adjusted to the problem. The king, they knew, was at Fort Belvedere, where motorists stared at the gates. The Cabinet appeared to be in intermittent session; and Downing Street was packed with sightseers, diversified at intervals by individuals and groups with definite opinions favourable to the king. They knew that the Archbishop of Canterbury had called on the prime minister and that Lord Craigavon, who had come over from Belfast, confined his public utterances to an oracular injunction to "Trust Baldwin." Mrs Simpson, who had left the uneasy scene two days before escorted by a lord in waiting, was in the South of France and was reported to have said "The King alone is judge. I have nothing to say except that I want to be left quiet."

The tone of ministers was changing; and one member of the public had been surprised at the week end, in conversation with a junior member of the government upon whom he had urged that abdication would be a national disaster, to receive the stern reply, "S. B. won't have any more of this behaviour." That morning a large committee of the Cabinet appeared to feel that the king's final answer should be hurried on; and when it was suggested that some weeks might be required, the prime minister indicated that the matter must be finished before Christmas, while some of his colleagues preferred even shorter shrift. By Sunday evening, however, this temper had abated somewhat, Mr Baldwin saying the king was not to be hurried and another minister informing journalists that "Of course we don't want to hurry the man." But it was evident to those in touch with the transaction that time was going to be short.

On Monday morning some newspapers appealed for time, others for an immediate solution; and that afternoon the House of Commons indicated its preference. When

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Colonel Wedgwood asked Mr Baldwin for an opportunity of debating his motion as to their continued allegiance to King Edward VIII, it was refused; and when he asked for "an assurance that the fatal and final step of abdication or the acceptance of abdication . . ." he was shouted down. A little later Mr Baldwin made a statement intimating that "it has always been, and remains, the earnest desire of the Government to afford His Majesty the fullest opportunity of weighing a decision which involves so directly his own future happiness and the interests of all his subjects." He added that "any considerable prolongation of the present state of suspense and uncertainty would involve risk of the gravest injury to National and Imperial interests," and that the king felt the same. Then he announced that no advice had been tendered by the government to the king except upon the possibility of morganatic marriage and that their exchanges with the Crown had been confined to "personal and informal" conversations with himself. "These matters," he continued with apparent disregard of his own initiative in October, "were not raised first by the Government but by His Majesty himself in conversation with me some weeks ago when he first informed me of his intention to marry Mrs Simpson whenever she should be free. The subject has, therefore, been for some time in the King's mind, and as soon as His Majesty has arrived at a conclusion as to the course he desires to take he will no doubt communicate it to his Governments in this country and the Dominions." When Mr Churchill rose to ask "that no irrevocable step . . ." he was sharply interrupted by shouts of "No"; and his attempt to state the bearing of the problem on the constitution ended in excited ejaculations of "Speech" and "Sit down." For the House was obviously impatient and plainly indisposed for consideration or delay.

This was a strange demonstration on the part of a deliber-

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ative body. But the last Parliament of George V and thirty-seventh of the United Kingdom was excitable. Elected at the end of 1935, its members found themselves almost immediately faced with the Hoare-Laval drama, followed by a demise of the Crown and a new king's accession. These dramatic and impressive incidents had left them with a sense that they were playing an historic role, which was accentuated by the subsequent development of controversy over the king's marriage. Here, if the sovereign chose to defy his Parliament, might be a matter which would make each of them one with Pym and Hampden. True, he had not displayed the slightest tendency to do so. But they felt a little like them just the same. Nor was this tendency to dramatise themselves diminished by such contacts as the week end had afforded with local leaders of organised opinion in their constituencies, which was faithfully reflected in their latest attitude. Besides, a strange proliferation of exciting anecdotes, especially in Labour circles, led many to believe that Mrs Simpson might exercise an undesirable influence on foreign policy, since it was freely stated that she was a friend of Herr von Ribbentrop. The fact that she had only met him twice at other people's tables (and had not been favourably impressed by his mechanical recording of Nazi formulæ) was immaterial; and it was a strange irony that at this stage ministers were aided by an imputation of appeasement, which was later to become the policy of a Cabinet containing almost all of Mr Baldwin's present colleagues. But the story served effectively to check any tendency on the part of Left sympathisers to support the royal marriage and added something to the effervescence of the House of Commons, where members shouted Mr Churchill down with a touch of the same hysteria as seized them at a later sitting on the joyful news that Mr Chamberlain was going back to Munich.

The Duke of York had spent a good part of the day

Fort Belvedere

with his brother at Fort Belvedere; and the light in the king's bedroom was still burning. But there was little doubt on Monday evening that the end was not far off.

On Tuesday, December 8, *The Times* chronicled the Parliamentary proceedings of the day before as "Mr Churchill's Bad Day" and finally dismissed alternative proposals as "this distasteful device . . . this foolish and deplorable product of misguided ingenuity," which could have no other consequence for the king's wife than to provide "that she may carry in solitary prominence the brand of unfitness for the Queen's Throne." On the same day Mrs Simpson issued an announcement of her invariable "wish to avoid any action or proposal which would hurt or damage His Majesty or the Throne. Today her attitude is unchanged, and she is willing, if such action would solve the problem, to withdraw forthwith from a situation that has been rendered unhappy and untenable." But would it solve the problem? Was the problem to be solved at all?

That evening Mr Baldwin drove to Fort Belvedere and saw the king for the last time. He had decided that it would be a friendly act to spend the night there. But the king seemed utterly worn out; and the prime minister preferred to return to London after his audience. They sat there in a quiet drawing room before the fire, and the prime minister repeated all the old arguments about the only two alternatives that he had left. The king answered wearily that his mind was made up and asked if he might be spared further argument. But Mr Baldwin evidently failed to hear and launched into a second and more forceful repetition of his plea. When this was over, the king was too tired for a dinner party; and eight weary men—two royal dukes, the prime minister, a secretary and the king's personal advisers—sat down to dine without him.

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But the king walked in and took the head of his own table with Mr Baldwin on his right. He had decided to go through with it; and eight weary men were never better entertained. As he sat talking cheerfully and watching to make sure that all his guests were properly looked after, one royal guest turned to his neighbour and said, "Look at him. We simply cannot let him go." And yet his going was the cause of that brave dinner party at Fort Belvedere.

IV

Westminster

... **F**ROM HIS MAJESTY THE KING, signed by His Majesty's own hand." The prime minister was speaking once again, and he advanced upon the Speaker's chair holding a document—one of the documents with which Sir John had kept them all so busy the night before. Mr Baldwin had told them that he wished the abdication to be completed by Friday night. That was at dinnertime on Wednesday evening; and after dinner Sir John Simon established his headquarters in Downing Street to organise with due formality the proper sequence of events. After an evening devoted to these labours he drove down on Thursday morning to take leave of the king.

"... signed by His Majesty's own hand." The prime minister was speaking, and he gave the papers to the Speaker, who read them to the House. The king's message told them of his "final and irrevocable decision" to renounce the throne, because "the burden which constantly rests upon the shoulders of a Sovereign is so heavy that it can only be borne in circumstances different from those in which I now find Myself." The Instrument of Abdication followed, witnessed by his three brothers, with its words of cold finality; and the king's message continued with his statement that the step was taken after

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full consideration and that delay would be "injurious to the peoples whom I have tried to serve as Prince of Wales and as King and whose future happiness and prosperity are the constant wish of My heart." So he took leave of them "in the confident hope that the course which I have thought it right to follow is that which is best for the stability of the Throne and Empire and the happiness of My peoples," enjoining them to take the necessary steps in order to ensure the prompt succession of the Duke of York.

Then the prime minister was at the table. He opened with a word upon the gravity of the king's message and the difficulty of his own task. The House was asked to sympathise with his position and "to remember that in this last week I have had but little time in which to compose a speech for delivery today, so I must tell what I have to tell truthfully, sincerely and plainly, with no attempt to dress up or to adorn." Then he alluded with some feeling to his long friendship with the king—"a friendship which I value, and I know that he would agree with me in saying to you that it was not only a friendship, but, between man and man, a friendship of affection. I would like to tell the House that when we said 'Good-bye' on Tuesday night at Fort Belvedere we both knew and felt and said to each other that that friendship, so far from being impaired by the discussions of this last week, bound us more closely together than ever and would last for life." (How closely was not altogether plain from subsequent official dealings with the king.)

A narrative ensued, opening abruptly with Mr Baldwin's return to work after the holidays about the middle of October, the correspondence on his desk from British subjects in America and elsewhere, the prospect of an impending divorce case and the first dawn of his misgivings. Then he told them how he had decided to talk the matter

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over with the king "not only as a counsellor, but as a friend," and without reference to any other member of the government. After narrating in some detail the preliminaries of the interview, he paid a tribute to both participants—to his own veracity and to the king's incapacity to take offence—"The whole of our discussions have been carried out, as I have said, with an increase, if possible, of that mutual respect and regard in which we stood." The interview was then recalled—the prime minister's anxieties, his statement on the nature of the British monarchy and the risk of public comment if matters were left in doubt by the result of the divorce proceedings. He made no reference to any practical suggestions which he might have made in that connection and informed the House that he "went away glad that the ice had been broken."

Then the speaker passed from the conversation of October 20 to the king's summons for a further talk on November 16. The House was told how the prime minister had opened with a plain intimation that the country would not approve of the king marrying Mrs Simpson and that his enemies had never doubted Mr Baldwin's gift of knowing how the English people would react. Next he had informed the king that his wife would become queen automatically and that, in consequence, "in the choice of a Queen the voice of the people must be heard." The king, he told the House of Commons, had replied that there was something he had wished to tell him for a long time. "He said, 'I am going to marry Mrs Simpson, and I am prepared to go.' I said, 'Sir, that is most grievous news and it is impossible for me to make any comment on it to-day.'"

Shortly after this conversation "a suggestion had been made to me that a possible compromise might be arranged to avoid those two possibilities that had been seen, first in the distance and then approaching nearer and nearer.

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The compromise was that the King should marry, that Parliament should pass an Act enabling the lady to be the King's wife without the position of Queen." The prime minister had been sent for once again on November 25; and when the king asked what he thought of the suggestion, "I told him that I had not considered it. I said, 'I can give you no considered opinion.' If he asked me my first reaction informally, my first reaction was that Parliament would never pass such a Bill. But I said that if he desired it I would examine it formally. He said he did so desire. Then I said, 'It will mean my putting that formally before the whole Cabinet and communicating with the Prime Ministers of the Dominions, and was that his wish?' He told me that it was. I said that I would do it."

At his next audience, on December 2, Mr Baldwin had reported to the king the Cabinet's refusal to propose such legislation and the indications that this view was shared by the Dominions. "His Majesty said he was not surprised at that answer. He took my answer with no question and he never recurred to it again. . . . He behaved there as a great gentleman; he said no more about it. The matter was closed. I never heard another word about it from him." (Strange that no hint of the king's hope for leave to broadcast to his subjects on those very lines appeared to linger in Mr Baldwin's memory.) Then he told the House how he "pointed out that the possible alternatives had been narrowed, and that it really had brought him into the position that he would be placed in a grievous situation between two conflicting loyalties in his own heart—either complete abandonment of the project on which his heart was set, and remaining as King, or doing as he intimated to me that he was prepared to do, in the talk which I have reported, going, and later on contracting that marriage, if it were possible. During the last days,

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from that day until now, that has been the struggle in which His Majesty has been engaged."

The rest was simple. Mr Baldwin paid a tribute to the king's determination to "go with dignity," his abhorrence of a king's party and his decision to avoid the cheering crowds of London. He read the House a pencilled note from the king, stating that he had always been on the best of terms with his successor and that he was confident the Duke of York deserved and would receive the support of the whole empire. (But he omitted to make use of a communication in the same handwriting, which he had received that morning from the same quarter, stating that "the other person most intimately concerned" had consistently and to the last endeavoured to dissuade him from his decision.) He told the House that the situation had arisen "from that very frankness of His Majesty's character which is one of his many attractions. It would have been perfectly possible for His Majesty not to have told me at the date when he did, and not to have told me for some months to come. . . ."

Then he spoke of himself—"It is impossible, unfortunately, to avoid talking to some extent today about one's self. These last days have been days of great strain. . . ." But he was fortified by a conviction that nothing had been left undone. They were not there, he told the House of Commons, as judges: the king had told them what he wanted them to do, and he thought that they must close their ranks and do it. The Cabinet had formally conveyed their hope that the king would reconsider his decision. But he had, with equal formality, declined; and Mr Baldwin expressed his confidence that where he had failed, no one could have succeeded.

The House, he added, was "a theatre which is being watched by the whole world. Let us conduct ourselves with that dignity which His Majesty is showing in this

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hour of his trial. . . . Let no word be spoken today that the utterer of that word may regret in days to come, let no word be spoken that causes pain to any soul . . ." and he reminded them of Queen Mary, of the maintenance of their democracy and of their efforts to make their country a better place for all the people in it.

He had said that he wished to have the abdication completed by Friday night; and before two o'clock on Friday afternoon His Majesty's Declaration of Abdication Act, 1936, was law.

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HE HAD SAID GOOD-BYE to Fort Belvedere. All that was over now; and the big headlights of his car swept through the winter night towards the castle. Then they were in a room upstairs, where he used to sit sometimes. But there was a microphone there now, and a high official of the B.B.C. made uneasy conversation about events in Spain. After that he read over his three sheets of typescript with a few pencilled alterations, tried his voice and waited to begin.

As the castle clock struck ten, a voice above his seated figure spoke into the microphone in front of him. "This," it said, "is Windsor Castle. His Royal Highness Prince Edward." In the silence a listening world heard a door close carefully at Windsor; and he was left alone with them.

"At long last," the light, familiar voice began, "I am able to say a few words of my own.

"I have never wanted to withhold anything, but until now it has not been constitutionally possible for me to speak.

"A few hours ago I discharged my last duty as King and Emperor, and now that I have been succeeded by my brother, the Duke of York, my first words must be to declare my allegiance to him.

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"This I do with all my heart.

"You all know the reasons which have impelled me to renounce the Throne, but I want you to understand that in making up my mind I did not forget the country or the Empire, which as Prince of Wales and lately as King I have for twenty-five years tried to serve

"But you must"—he was speaking slowly now—"believe me when I tell you that I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as King as I"—he spoke the pronoun with deep emphasis—"would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love.

"And I want you to know that the decision I have made has been mine and mine alone. This was a thing I had to judge entirely for myself. The other person most nearly concerned"—this was what he had hoped that Mr Baldwin would have told the House of Commons—"has tried up to the last" (he stressed the four words) "to persuade me to take a different course.

"I have made this, the most serious decision of my life, only upon a single thought—of what would in the end be the best for all.

"This decision has been made the less difficult to me by the sure knowledge that my brother, with his long training in the public affairs of this country and with his fine qualities, will be able to take my place forthwith without interruption or injury to the life and progress of the Empire.

"And he has one matchless blessing"—there was a pause—"enjoyed by so many of you, and not bestowed on me"—another pause—"a happy home with his wife and children.

"During these hard days I have been comforted by Her Majesty, my mother, and by my family. The Ministers of the Crown, and in particular Mr Baldwin, the

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Prime Minister" (he had pencilled in the reference as a kindly afterthought), "have always treated me with full consideration. There has never been any constitutional difference between me and them, and between me and Parliament.

"Bred in the constitutional traditions by my father, I should never have allowed any such issue to arise. Ever since I was Prince of Wales, and later on when I occupied the Throne, I have been treated with the greatest kindness by all classes of people, wherever I have lived or journeyed throughout the Empire. For that I am very grateful.

"I now quit altogether public affairs, and I lay down my burden. It may be some time before I return to my native land, but I shall always follow the fortunes of the British race and Empire with profound interest, and if at any time in the future"—he paused again—"I can be found of service to His Majesty in a private station I shall not fail.

"And now we all have a new King. I wish him,"—the voice at Windsor paused—"and you, his people, happiness and prosperity with all my heart. God bless you all." And then, in a loud, ritual tone, he cried, "God save the King."

The speech, the final speech, was over. Its substance and the most vital of its words had been all his own, although it owed a little of its ornament to a skilled hand. Half the world had paused to hear him, and now he turned to go. There were more good-byes at the castle and a line of cheering faces in the raw December night as the big car went by. Then they were back at Royal Lodge, where he had dined with his whole family. They were still waiting for him; and when his mother drove away an hour later, he bowed her off superbly. There was still more time to wait, and the four brothers were left talking until it was time for him to go. Then he took his leave with a bow over the new king's hand.

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The big car plunged forward through the night; and he sat talking quietly about old times and old acquaintance and the sleeping towns along the Portsmouth road that slipped past the windows of his car. He spoke a good deal of his mother and her kindness; and the slow hours passed, until his headlights swept the shuttered streets of Portsmouth. When they found the dockyard, they went in at a gate which took them by HMS Victory; and he passed Nelson's flagship with a lift of the hat. Then they left the car and walked about in the raw fog to find the ship that he was looking for. Not far away he recognised the looming bulk of HMS Courageous, where he had made his little speech to cheering seamen just a month before. A car overtook them in the dockyard, and the commander in chief led the way to HMS Fury. That was his destination; and as he went on board, the admiral in tears bade him good-bye for the navy.

There were more leave-takings in the small cabin; and Fury felt her way towards the coast of France in a mid-winter fog.

The journey lay before him now across the Continent to Austria. He had not known for many hours that this was where he would be going. For his destination was not a matter which had engaged the attention of ministers—those ministers of whose consideration he spoke that night. So nothing had been officially arranged for him. (Perhaps it was a first instalment of Mr Baldwin's lifelong friendship.) He was left to make his own arrangements, and something had been sketchily arranged on his behalf at a hotel in Switzerland. That was where he thought that he was bound for, as the dreadful evening opened and he drove away from Fort Belvedere for the last time. But as it seemed intolerable that he should be hunted by news-

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paper men in a Swiss hotel, friendly voices had been busy on long-distance telephones across the Continent. So while they were all at dinner, word reached him at Royal Lodge that something better than a Swiss hotel had been found and that, in consequence, he would be going to Vienna.

It was a long journey for a tired man, as the rails gleamed along the winding track all the way through France and Switzerland. He had left Windsor after midnight on Friday; and it would be Sunday evening before he walked into a friendly house outside Vienna to be told how strangely the Archbishop of Canterbury had been speaking of him. That divine had already told the House of Lords on Thursday that "no such tragedy of a pathos so profound has ever been enacted on the stage of our national history. I wonder whether in all history any renunciation has ever been made comparable with that which has been announced in the gracious Message we have just received. Of the motive which has compelled that renunciation we dare not speak. It takes us into the region of the inner mysteries of human life and human nature. . . ." He spoke that afternoon with feeling of the "stab in our hearts" at the sad news, and of the king's achievement and of his charm and frankness. But by Sunday night his tone was strangely altered. For preaching in the course of a broadcast religious service, the archbishop opened on a note of pride—"It is right to be proud of the way in which the nation has stood the test. Yet let there be no boasting in our pride. . . ." (Press comment in some less exalted quarters had struck the same note, intimating that "the Continent was much impressed, and realised once more that we are not as other people," which was possibly correct—although, perhaps, not in the sense intended by its writer. For Continental minds are frequently impervious to British ethics. Foreigners are not invariably impressed by what Macaulay

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termed "The British public in one of its periodical fits of morality" or by the Whig expedient for solving awkward problems by the inexpensive device of the Single Transferable Loyalty. Some, indeed, were left with a bewildered feeling that a community, which had once changed its faith in order that a king might marry, had now changed a king in order to preserve its faith.)

But the archbishop proceeded in a deeper tone. Speaking with careful mournfulness and in the full diapason of a churchman's eloquence, he offered a strange commentary on the recent past. "What pathos, nay, what tragedy surrounds the central figure of these swiftly moving scenes. On the 11th day of December, 248 years ago, King James II fled from Whitehall. By a strange coincidence on the 11th day of December last week, King Edward VIII, after speaking his last words to his people, left Windsor Castle, the centre of all the splendid traditions of his ancestors, and his Throne, and went out an exile. In the darkness he left these shores.

"Seldom, if ever, has any British Sovereign come to the Throne with greater natural gifts for his kingship. Seldom, if ever, has any Sovereign been welcomed by a more enthusiastic loyalty. From God he received a high and sacred trust. Yet by his own will he has abdicated—he has surrendered the trust. With characteristic frankness he has told us his motive. It was a craving for private happiness." This was a crude perversion of all the king had said, of his insistence that private happiness was the indispensable condition under which his public duty could be done. If this was not permitted, he was not prepared to do his duty badly. That had been the simple basis of his renunciation. As an emperor had said, "*Au fait, que m'importe le trône puisque je ne puis plus rien pour la France? Le trône n'est plus qu'un morceau de bois auquel je ne tiens pas.*" But the archbishop saw no more

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than "a craving for private happiness. Strange and sad it must be that for such a motive, however strongly it pressed upon his heart, he should have disappointed hopes so high and abandoned a trust so great. Even more strange and sad it is that he should have sought his happiness in a manner inconsistent with Christian principles of marriage, and within a social circle whose standards and ways of life are alien to all the best instincts and traditions of his people.

"Let those who belong to this circle know that today they stand rebuked by the judgment of the nation who had loved King Edward.

"I have shrunk from saying these words. But I have felt compelled for the sake of sincerity and truth to say them. . . ."

That strange denunciation with its unpleasing note of triumph, as of a more successful Wolsey emerging happy from his duel with an up-to-date Anne Boleyn, waited for a weary man as he walked into a friendly house outside Vienna on Sunday night.

But in the dark hours of Saturday, December 12, he was still in thick weather off the English coast. It was all over. There would be no coronation now; and as the lean destroyer thudded upchannel towards the coast of France, it all receded—the crowds, the abbey ritual, the roaring streets, the mutter of the organ, lifted coronets, the silver note of trumpets, prayers, benedictions, homage and the silken sound of robes. That was all left behind him in the winter night. But the dark waves, with a faint memory of what might have been, went by the moving vessel with a silken sound.

That was the lonely coronation of an uncrowned king of England.

AUTHORITIES

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JANUARY

1. *Westminster, I.* The funeral processions of King George V are recorded from the writer's observation, supplemented by *Hail and Farewell: the Passing of King George V* (1936).

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2. *Washington, D.C.* President Roosevelt's actions and utterances from 1929 to 1936 are recorded in the five volumes of *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (1938), annotated by himself. The economic background of American wealth and industrial leadership is unfavourably presented in G. Myers' *History of the Great American Fortunes* (1936) and F. Lundberg's *America's 60 Families* (1937). New Deal ideology may be studied in R. G. Tugwell's *Industrial Discipline* (1933) and D. R. Richberg's *The Rainbow* (1936), and the Supreme Court question in *The Nine Old Men* (1937) by D. Pearson and R. S. Allen and *The 168 Days* (1938) by J. Alsop and T. Catledge, supplemented by Lord Bryce's *American Commonwealth* (1913); topical comment in *I'd Rather Be Right* (1937) by G. S. Kaufman and M. Hart.

The writer was in the United States from January to April, 1933, and from November, 1937, to March, 1938, attending the President's press conferences in December, 1937.

3. *Westminster, II.* Mr Baldwin's broadcast of January 21, 1936, is printed in *Hail and Farewell: the Passing of King George*

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V, and his House of Commons speech of January 23, 1936, in *Parliamentary Debates*, 308 H.C. Deb. 55. (1936). Facts as to his career and personality in *Encyclopædia Britannica* (14th edition, 1929) s.v. Stanley Baldwin, Sir Philip Burne-Jones, Sir Edward Poynter and Rudyard Kipling, supplemented by his speeches reprinted in *On England* (1926), *Our Inheritance* (1928) and *This Torch of Freedom* (1935).

4. *Rome*. The Italian design on Abyssinia, with extracts from Signor Mussolini's correspondence, is officially disclosed in Marshal E. De Bono's *Anno XIII: the Conquest of an Empire* (1937); and the course of events is recorded in A. J. Toynbee's *Survey of International Affairs*, 1935, Vol. II (1936), supplemented by *Documents on International Affairs*, 1935, Vol. II (1937) and *Parliamentary Debates*, 307 H.C. Deb. 55. (1936). The account of Mr Baldwin's subsequent dealings with Sir Austen Chamberlain was given by the latter to the writer's informant.

MARCH

Köln a. R. The march into the Rhineland is narrated from *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Illustrated London News* and the newsreels of British Movietone News.

The writer's summary of Hitler's evolution and opinions is drawn entirely from the full text of *Mein Kampf*, available in French (1934) and now (1939) in English, on which *The House that Hitler Built* (1937) by S. H. Roberts is the best English commentary.

Diplomatic history in J. W. Wheeler-Bennett's *Brest-Litovsk: the Forgotten Peace* (1938), *Correspondence showing the course of Certain Diplomatic Discussions directed towards securing an European Settlement, June 1934 to March 1936* (1936), A. J. Toynbee's *Survey of International Affairs*, 1936 (1937) and *Documents on International Affairs*, 1936 (1937), supplemented by R. B. Mowat's *Europe in Crisis* (1936).

MAY

Geneva. The sequel of the Abyssinian war is to be found in A. J. Toynbee's *Survey of International Affairs*, 1935, Vol. II, supplemented by *Documents on International Affairs*, 1935, Vol. II, and *Mussolini's Roman Empire* (1938) by G. T. Garratt.

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JULY

1. *Constitution Hill*. The events of July 18, 1936, are narrated from *The Times*, *Illustrated London News* and the newsreels of British Movietone News, supplemented by the writer's personal enquiries.

The same sources are drawn upon for the writer's survey of the antecedent events of King Edward's reign, supplemented by *The Annual Register*, 1936 (1937), *King-Hall Survey*, 1936 (1937), G. B. Harrison's *The Day before Yesterday: a Journal of the Year 1936* (1938) and for more special aspects *The Windsor Tapestry* (1938) by Compton Mackenzie, *His Was the Kingdom* (1937) by F. Owen & R. J. Thompson and *The Abdication of Edward VIII* (1937) by J. L. White.

2. *Tetuan*. Information as to the military outbreak in Spain, apart from an impartial summary in *The Annual Register*, 1936, is still two-sided, C. Prieto's *Spanish Front* (1936) and "Hispanicus' " *Foreign Intervention in Spain* (1937) taking the Spanish government's point of view, while the reverse is true of E. A. Peers's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1936), R. Timmerman's *General Franco* (1937) and G. Rotvand's *Franco Means Business* (1937).

General Franco's flight from Las Palmas is described from the recollections of his English pilot and Tetuan from the writer's observation.

3. *Vimy Ridge*. The unveiling of the Canadian War Memorial on July 26, 1936, is narrated from *The Times*, *Illustrated London News* and the newsreel of British Movietone News.

AUGUST

Vigo. The writer visited Corunna and Vigo on August 27 and 28, 1936.

OCTOBER

1. *Chicago, Ill.* President Roosevelt's campaign speeches are available in his *Public Papers and Addresses*, Vol. V (1938). Mr Hoover's views are summarised from an address delivered to the Economic Club of Chicago on December 16, 1937; Supreme Court question in Lord Bryce's *American Commonwealth* and *The 168*

Authorities

Days by J. Alsop and T. Catledge; campaign contributions in *America's 60 Families* by F. Lundberg.

2. *Fort Belvedere*. Facts as to King Edward's movements in *The Times*, *The Annual Register*, 1936, and *The Day before Yesterday*, by G. B. Harrison, amplified in *The Windsor Tapestry* by Compton Mackenzie, *His Was the Kingdom* by F. Owen and R. J. Thompson and *King Edward VIII* by H. Bolitho, and supplemented by personal enquiries.

Facts as to Mr Baldwin in *The Times* and *The Annual Register*, 1936, supplemented by personal enquiries; interview of October 20 in Mr Baldwin's speech of December 10, 1936 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 318 *H.C. Deb.* 55.), supplemented by personal enquiries.

3. *Victoria Station*. Herr von Ribbentrop's arrival in London on October 26, 1936, is narrated from *The Times* and *Illustrated London News*, supplemented by S. H. Roberts' *The House that Hitler Built*, A. J. Toynbee's *Survey of International Affairs*, 1936, and *Documents on International Affairs*, 1936.

4. *Buckingham Palace*. COURT CIRCULAR: "Buckingham Palace, Oct. 30.—The King gave a Dinner Party this evening, to which the following had the honour of being invited:—

"His Excellency the Argentine Ambassador (Señor Dr Don Manuel E. Malbrán), Dr Carlos Saavedra Lamas (Argentine Minister for Foreign Affairs), the Right Hon. Anthony Eden, M.P., the Right Hon. Walter Runciman, M.P., the Right Hon. Montagu Norman, the Right Hon. Sir Malcolm Robertson, General the Hon. Sir Herbert Lawrence, Sir Robert Vansittart, Sir Edward Peacock, Sir Follett Holt, Mr Philip Guedalla, Mr William Rootes, Major the Right Hon. Alexander Hardinge (Private Secretary) and Brigadier-General Sir Hill Child, Bt. (Master of the Household).

"The String Band of the Welsh Guards, under the direction of Major Andrew Harris, played a selection of Music during and after Dinner."

The exterior, interior and contents of the palace are fully described in *Buckingham Palace* (1931) by H. Clifford Smith.

Authorities

NOVEMBER

London-Portland-Rhondda-London. Facts in *The Times*, *The Annual Register* and G. B. Harrison's *The Day before Yesterday*, supplemented by personal enquiries and Compton Mackenzie's *Windsor Tapestry*; Mr Baldwin's speech of November 12, 1936, in *Parliamentary Debates*, 317, *H.C. Deb. 5s.* (1936); interviews of November 16 and 25 in Mr Baldwin's speech of December 10, 1936 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 318 *H.C. Deb. 5s.*); Mr Lyons' speech of December 11, 1936, in Compton Mackenzie's *Windsor Tapestry*.

DECEMBER

1. *Buenos Aires.* President Roosevelt's addresses at Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires are available in Vol. V of his *Public Papers and Addresses*, supplemented by *Survey of International Affairs*, 1936, and *The Republics of South America: a Report by a Study Group of Members of the Royal Institute of International Affairs* (1937).

2. *London.* The events of December 2 and 3, 1936, are recorded from *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Herald* and *News-Chronicle*, supplemented by G. B. Harrison's *The Day before Yesterday*, J. L. White's *The Abdication of Edward VIII, His Was the Kingdom* by F. Owen and R. J. Thompson, and the writer's personal observation and enquiries; interview of December 2 in Mr Baldwin's speech of December 10, 1936 (*Parliamentary Debates*, 318 *H.C. Deb. 5s.*); *Parliamentary Questions of December 3*, *ibid.*

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